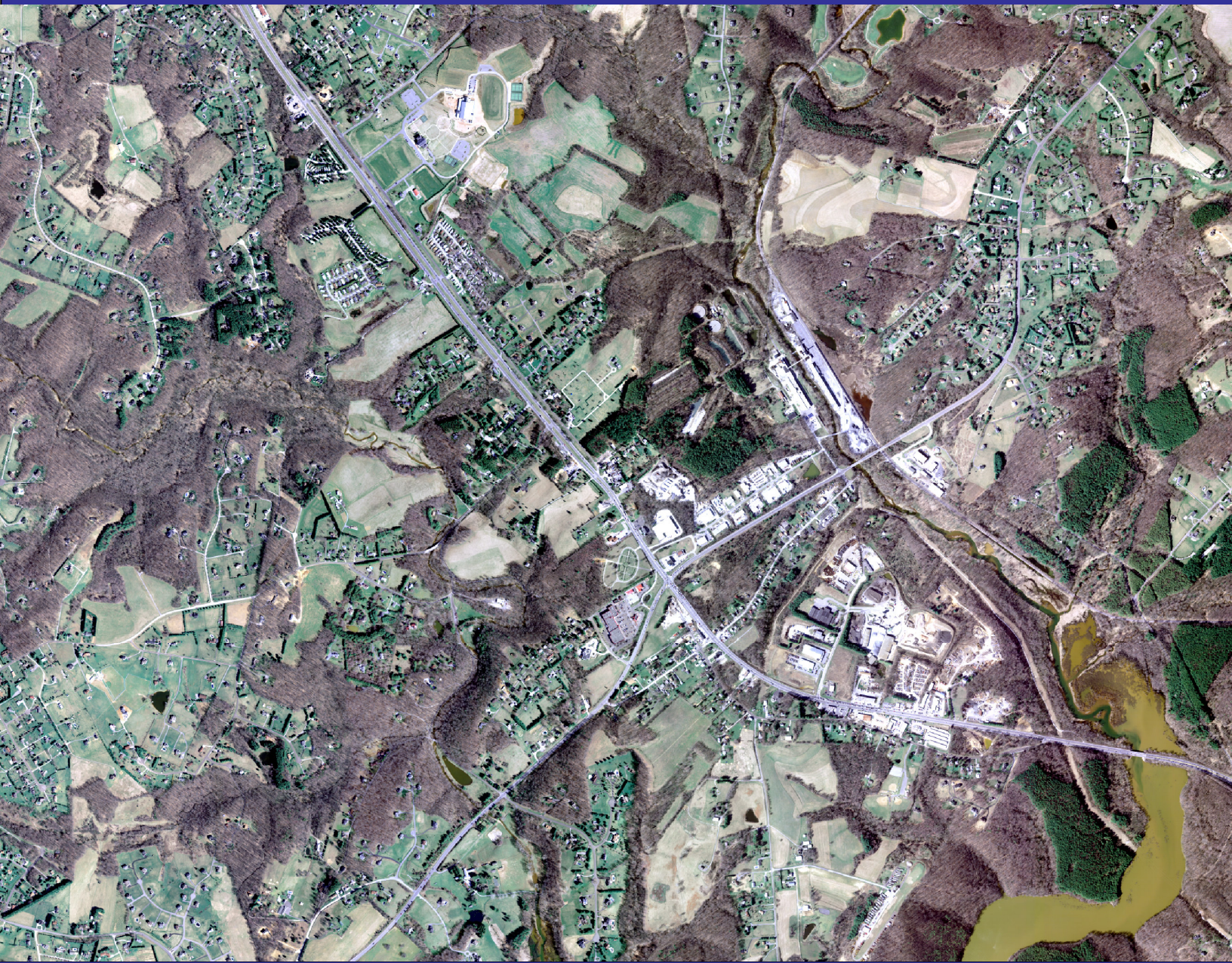


Finksburg Corridor Plan



DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW
May 2009

Carroll County Department of Planning

DRAFT

Finksburg Corridor Plan

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Finksburg Corridor Plan

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Chapter 1: Introduction

❖ What is the Finksburg Corridor Plan?

The Finksburg Corridor Plan is a long-range planning document that will guide the growth and development of the Finksburg corridor, roughly defined as the area along the MD 140 corridor from the county line in the east to Brown Road in the west. The effort began as a comprehensive update to the *1981 Finksburg Area and Environs Comprehensive Plan*. The policies and recommended actions within the plan are the culmination of staff research, various community participation opportunities, and direction from the Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission.

❖ Community Input

In preparation for the update of the Finksburg Area and Environs Comprehensive Plan, several opportunities were taken to gather input from resident, business owners, and community leaders on the important issues facing the Finksburg area. Interviews were conducted with community officials and leaders to help identify critical planning issues related growth management, transportation, community facilities, economic development, and natural resource protection, among others. A community survey was mailed to all property owners in the 4th (Woolerys) election district to gather additional input on similar topics. The survey received a 32 percent response rate from the 5,300 that were mailed out. Four workshops also were held to define a vision and goals for the Finksburg comprehensive plan, and to provide input on proposed text and map recommendations. Finally, a follow-up survey was conducted to gauge support for the text and map recommendations. Of the 5,300 surveys mailed out, approximately 10 percent were returned. The results of the input received from the interviews, surveys, and community workshops have been incorporated into this document.

❖ Finksburg Community's Vision

The following vision statement represents what the participants in the various forms of community involvement for this community plan update felt to be the preferred future for their community. Future decisions and activities of the community will be consistent with this vision. Members of the community will strive to bring about the changes that will make this vision attainable.

The entrance to the Finksburg community provides a welcoming gateway to Carroll County. The core of the community is a hub for local commercial and social activities. This hub is surrounded by preservation and protection of agricultural and resource lands, which also showcase the finer qualities of the county. The Liberty Reservoir watershed is a recreational and functional asset to the community that provides a clean water supply to the region. New residential development

respects the nature of the community and its conservation ideals. Traffic flows through the community safely and efficiently, integrating the characteristics of the activity center.

❖ **Finksburg Community's Goals**

In addition to developing a unique vision statement within the community, a set of goals are also developed that are distinct to the needs of the community and that are more specific than the county-wide goals. The participants in this planning process identified the following priorities for the Finksburg community.

- To strengthen the boundaries of the corridor through farmland and open space preservation
- To provide flexibility in regulations and design standards to allow for creation of the concepts desired in the community's core
- To create development that provides positive environmental impact
- To locate new small businesses within the center of the community and other appropriate locations
- To provide an opportunity for the appropriate mix of land uses to be located within the corridor
- To provide incentives for redevelopment within the Finksburg core that creates community assets
- To establish a visually appealing gateway that welcomes residents and visitors to the pride and character of Carroll County
- To move traffic through the MD 140 corridor without disrupting the community's economic and social activities
- To create opportunities for non-motorized travel in the community
- To provide transportation and design improvements to the MD 140 corridor to promote the gateway concept
- To create usable and friendly public spaces
- To locate the appropriate needed public facilities in the activity centers of the community
- To provide additional recreational opportunities for all age levels
- To enhance the feeling of public and personal safety

In order to accomplish these goals, the community should be aware of what they are, especially those people in decision-making positions. Decisions and policies should reflect the desire to accomplish these goals. Activities should not be pursued that contradict the goals. A community comprehensive plan does not merely involve elected and appointed officials. All community leaders and residents need to be committed to accomplishing the goals for the plan to be successful.

❖ **Major Concepts & Intended Accomplishments**

The *Finksburg Corridor Plan* represents changes in the policy of land use development that have taken place in the Finksburg area since the 1970's. The elimination of the Community Planning Area designation for Finksburg affirms the concept that this portion of the county is best suited for lower intensity land use. The removal of this designation will also allow for expanded agricultural preservation efforts.

The importance of the MD 140 corridor to the vitality of Carroll County is clearly recognized within this plan through efforts to improve the functionality and appearance of the roadway. This can be accomplished best by allowing fewer access points along the highway and encouraging development that is in keeping with the nature of high volume traffic close to the corridor. In cooperation with the State Highway Administration, recommended improvements to the MD 140 corridor have been developed as part of this long-range plan.

In addition to being a main thoroughfare for Carroll County, the MD 140 corridor serves as the focal point for many community activities within Finksburg. Balancing both the needs of the Finksburg community and the region as a whole is vital in developing an effective plan. As a result, continuing to build upon and improve the character of the Finksburg community is a primary goal of this plan. A Boulevard designation replaces the Commercial designation and also applies in limited instances to some Manufacturing Processing designated land. The Boulevard concept was developed to achieve the variety of land uses and quality of site design necessary to support the vision. An area at the northwestern end of the corridor was designated Employment to enhance the quality and variety of land uses in the corridor and to take advantage of Finksburg's proximity to I-795 and the Baltimore metropolitan region. It is approximately 50 acres in size.

This plan also recognizes the sensitivity of the adjacent Liberty Reservoir and the need to protect this valuable drinking water resource from the detrimental effects of high impact land uses, poor stormwater management, and outdated wastewater disposal systems, among other things. At the same time, it recognizes that much of the existing development occurred without the benefit of today's technology to control pollutants carried in wastewater and stormwater runoff. The only way to correct this situation will be to promote the redevelopment of the corridor, thus triggering the review of development proposals using current environmental regulations. One of the best incentives to redevelop would be the provision of a community wastewater system, which not only would provide the needed redevelopment incentive but also would address existing and potential environmental hazards posed by the preponderance of individual septic systems located in such close proximity to the reservoir.

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Chapter 2: Corridor Plan

❖ Goals

- To strengthen the boundaries of the corridor through farmland and open space preservation
- To provide flexibility in regulations and design standards to allow for creation of the concepts desired in the community's core
- To create development that provides positive environmental impact
- To locate new small businesses within the center of the community and other appropriate locations
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The Finksburg corridor is situated along MD 140 and includes lands which have the greatest potential to be affected by any new development and activity related to the corridor. By focusing policies and recommendations on this area, the chapter provides a more detailed analysis of the Finksburg community core and develops steps that can be taken to achieve the community vision.

Each element within this chapter is specific to the MD 140 corridor and, subsequently, the Finksburg community. Although the Carroll County comprehensive plan covers many issues in this area, such as schools, environment, heritage, community facilities, and employment, this chapter explores characteristics that are unique to the corridor and deserve additional attention within this plan.

❖ Current Conditions

1 Current Development Patterns

The community of Finksburg originally was established as a concentration of linear residential development situated along Old Gamber Road, Cedarhurst Road, and Old Westminster Pike. The residential portion of this community is characterized by small lot sizes, a result of being developed prior to zoning and under health regulations that were much less restrictive than those of today. These lots may be poorly equipped to handle private septic systems due to limited land area for replacement systems. A significant amount of industry, as well as retail establishments, nearly surround this community. A historic church, sports park, and community shopping center provide many services to the immediate and surrounding neighborhoods. MD 140, which is a main traffic artery in the County, has a tremendous influence on this community. This neighborhood, as well as the surrounding business district, is located entirely within a State Priority Funding Area (PFA).

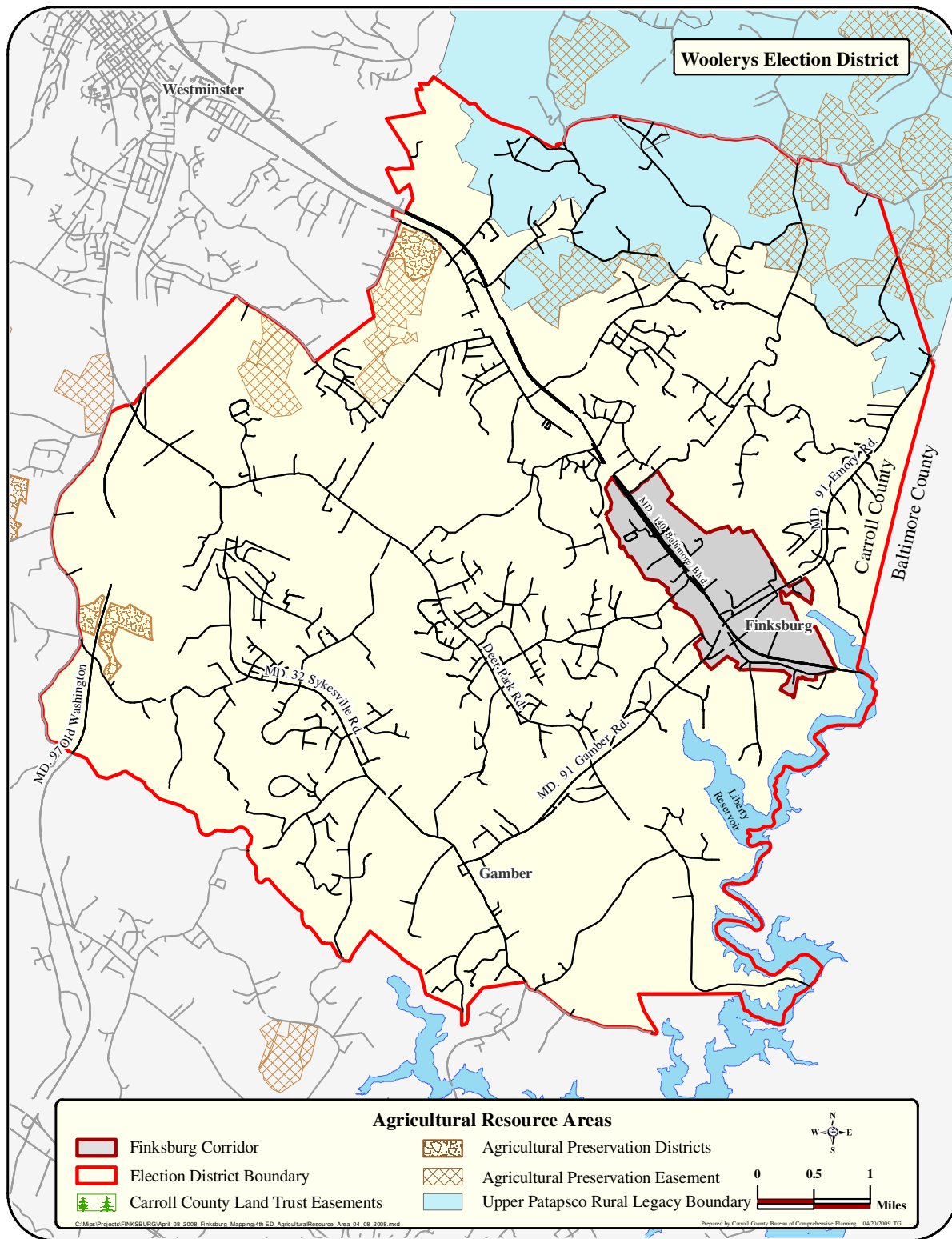
There are several fairly well-defined nodes of commercial development at the intersection of MD 140 and other roadways. Land surrounding the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91 encompasses the highest concentration of commercial uses in the Finksburg area. In this area, most retail and service-oriented businesses serve the local community.

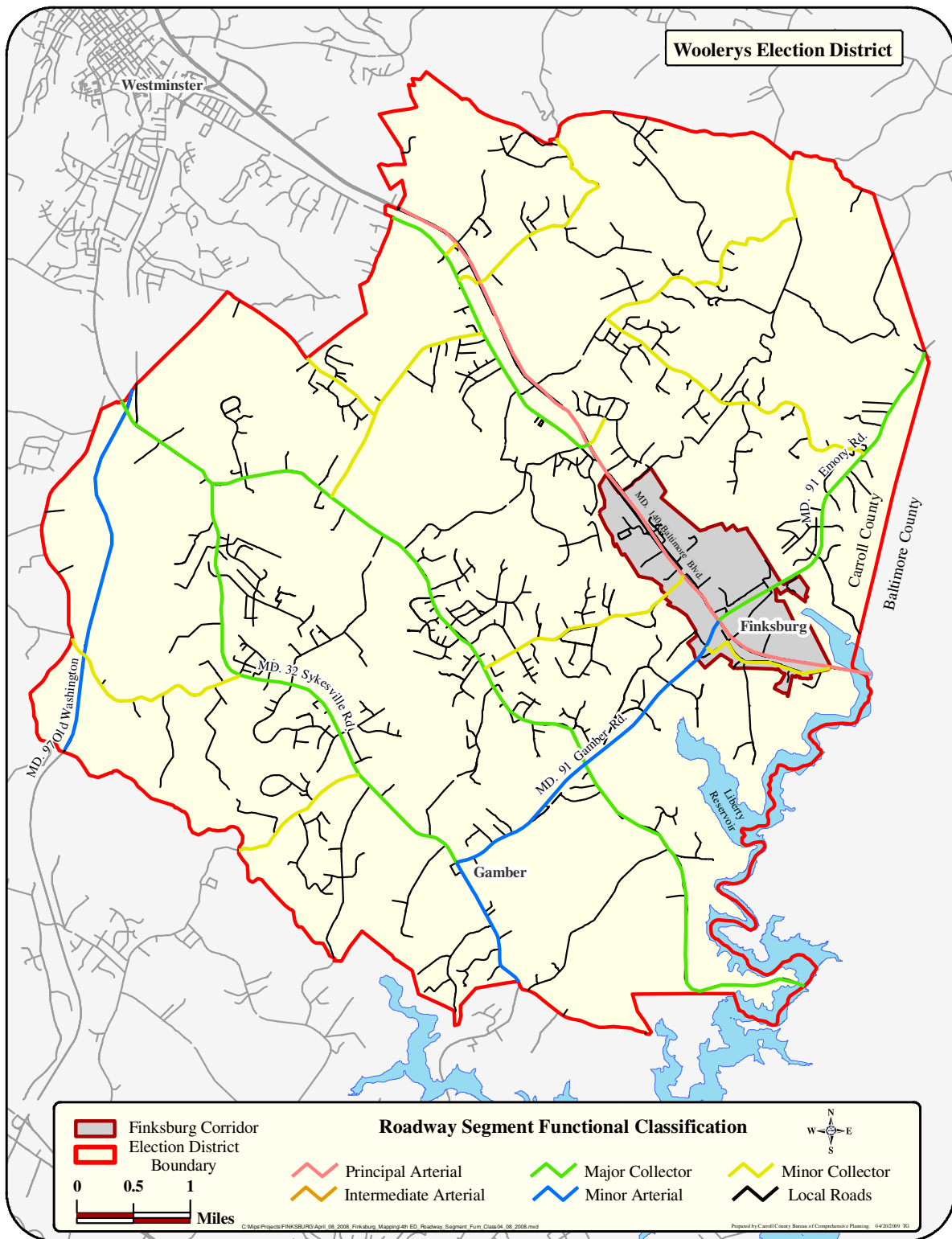
Land that is currently used for industrial purposes within the election district is generally located near the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91. A portion of this land has railroad access available. Some light industrial use is also located on Bethel Road, just north of MD 140.

Much of the countryside that surrounds the Finksburg corridor is devoted to new large-lot residential subdivisions that are an expansion of existing residential districts. At the outer edges of the Woolerys Election District, several large farms have been protected through land preservation programs, including the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, Rural Legacy, and the Carroll County Land Trust. The Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area reaches into the northernmost portion of the Woolerys Election District.

2 Transportation

The 1981 Finksburg Area and Environs Comprehensive Plan undertook a reexamination of the planned major streets that had been proposed in the 1970 Major Street Plan. Since 1970, the Agricultural zoning district had been created and there had been a greater recognition of the need to reduce densities and minimize non-point source pollution in the vicinity of Liberty Reservoir. As a result, the 1981 plan reduced the number of planned roads, emphasizing instead a system of local collector streets to move local traffic around the area and decrease congestion in the Finksburg and Gamber areas, in particular. Within the MD 140 corridor itself, the bulk of the planned roadways were proposed to facilitate movement to and around business locations once the planned median was constructed and various crossovers were eliminated. The 1981 plan also predicted the need to widen MD 140 to six lanes after 1999 due to increased traffic.





According to the 2005 *Highway Location Reference* from the State Highway Administration, the MD 140 corridor handles approximately 45,000 vehicles per day within the Finksburg area. MD 140, from Westminster to Finksburg, is one of the most heavily traveled State roadways in the county.

Local countywide paratransit is the only transit system currently being utilized in the area. Rail and bus transit to downtown Baltimore originate from the Owings Mills and Reisterstown areas, respectively. A large portion of residents who commute to work in other counties travel by automobile, resulting in heavy volumes of peak-hour traffic on MD 91 and MD 140. Although a Park and Ride lot is available adjacent to Sandymount Park, it is underutilized during the typical workday.

3 *Inventory of Existing Use of Land*

The comprehensive plan designates the land uses intended for properties within the area. These uses are controlled through the zoning of the property. However, not all uses are consistent with the zoning or land use designations because some uses were in existence prior to zoning or changes in zoning. If implemented effectively, the zoning should eventually be consistent with the land use designations.

During October 2000, planning staff performed a “windshield” survey of actual land uses throughout the corridor. Staff viewed buildings, structures, and vegetation on each property to determine, as much as possible, the existing use of the land at that time. In some cases, residential subdivision plans and site development plans were reviewed to verify the approval status of the development. Property tax map information was also reviewed to determine the location of recorded (or platted) subdivision lots. This survey was verified and updated in spring 2008.

What is included in each category of existing uses of land?

Single-Family Residential ➡ Land that is primarily developed with single-family housing, including designated open space within a residential subdivision, undeveloped land with platted lots, and unplatted lots that are part of an approved subdivision plan.

Multi-Family Residential ➡ Any housing/residential area where there are 2 or more units attached or within one building, including duplexes, condos, and apartments.

Commercial ➡ Land currently used for commercial purposes, including undeveloped lots with an approved site plan.

Industrial ➡ Land currently used for industrial purposes, including undeveloped lots with an approved site plan.

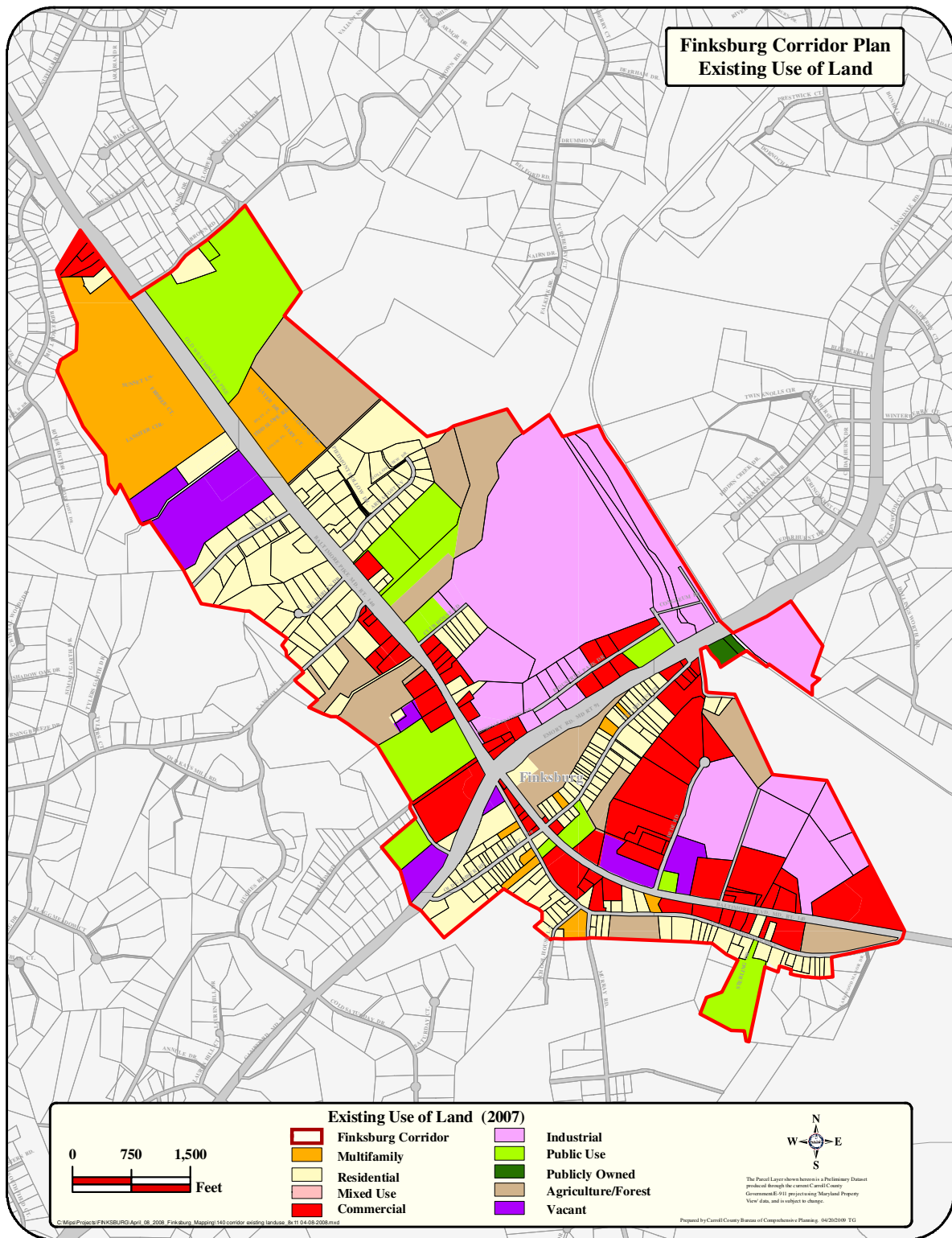
Agriculture/Resource ➡ Land that is currently farmed in some way (livestock, crops, etc.), including accompanying farm houses and associated buildings. This category also includes large areas of environmental resources or woods. These are areas that could have potential for a more intense developed use if the zoning or land use designations were changed.

Public Use ➡ Land that is privately-owned and is generally open to the public, the public is invited to use, or is somehow used for recreational purposes; and that is not developed for residential uses. This category would include such things as churches, parks, golf courses, etc.

Publicly Owned ➡ All lands publicly-owned (i.e., town, county, state, federal).

Mixed Use ➡ Land that has a mix of both commercial and residential uses on it.

Vacant ➡ Land that is either unimproved/not developed but which has the potential to be developed. This includes land that has an abandoned building. It also includes land for which the building may be in good shape but is not being used.



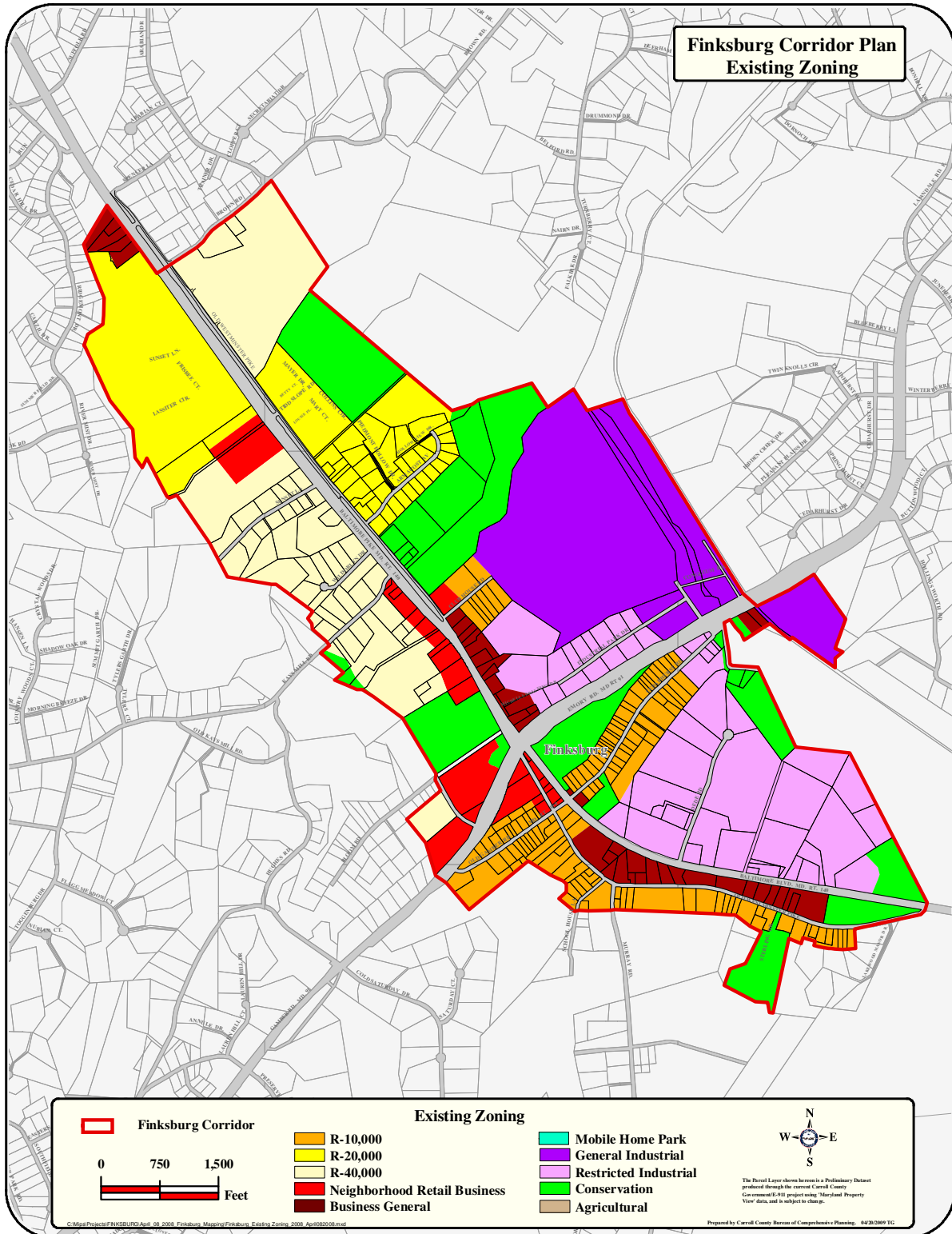
Existing use of land was inventoried according to the following categories: Mixed Use, Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Agriculture/Resource, Public Use, Publicly Owned, and Vacant. The following table provides the total acreage of each category as identified in the Finksburg Corridor.

Use of Land by Acreage April 2008		
Land Use	Finksburg Corridor	Percentage of Corridor (%)
Single-Family Residential	203.62	21%
Multi-Family Residential	98.97	10%
Commercial	140.52	14%
Industrial	244.74	25%
Agriculture / Resource	118.04	12%
Public Use	120.52	12%
Publicly Owned	2.59	<0.50%
Rail	0.50	<0.50%
Vacant	47.25	5%
Total Acres	976.75	100%
Source: Carroll County Planning Department, 2008		

4 *Current Zoning*

Current use of land and current zoning on a property do not always coincide. A property may be zoned residential but, if the owner does not choose to develop, it might remain in agricultural use indefinitely. Similarly, a property may have a use on it that predated the zoning so it is possible that a commercial use might exist in a residential zone. For this reason, the number of acres ascribed to particular uses of land in the previous table may vary from the number of acres for a comparable zoning designation. The following table provides a breakdown of the Finksburg Corridor by 2009 zoning; total acreage is given by each zoning district.

Zoning of Land by Acreage 2009		
Land Use	Finksburg Corridor	Percentage of Corridor (%)
R-10,000	87.17	8.91%
R-20,000	145.99	14.92%
R-40,000	162.37	16.59%
Neighborhood Retail Business	44.35	4.53%
General Business	41.87	4.28%
Restricted Industrial	170.75	17.45%
General Industrial	164.08	16.77%
Conservation	161.86	16.54%
Agriculture Resource Protection	0.00	0.00%
Total Acres	978.44	100.00%
Source: Carroll County Planning Department, 2009		

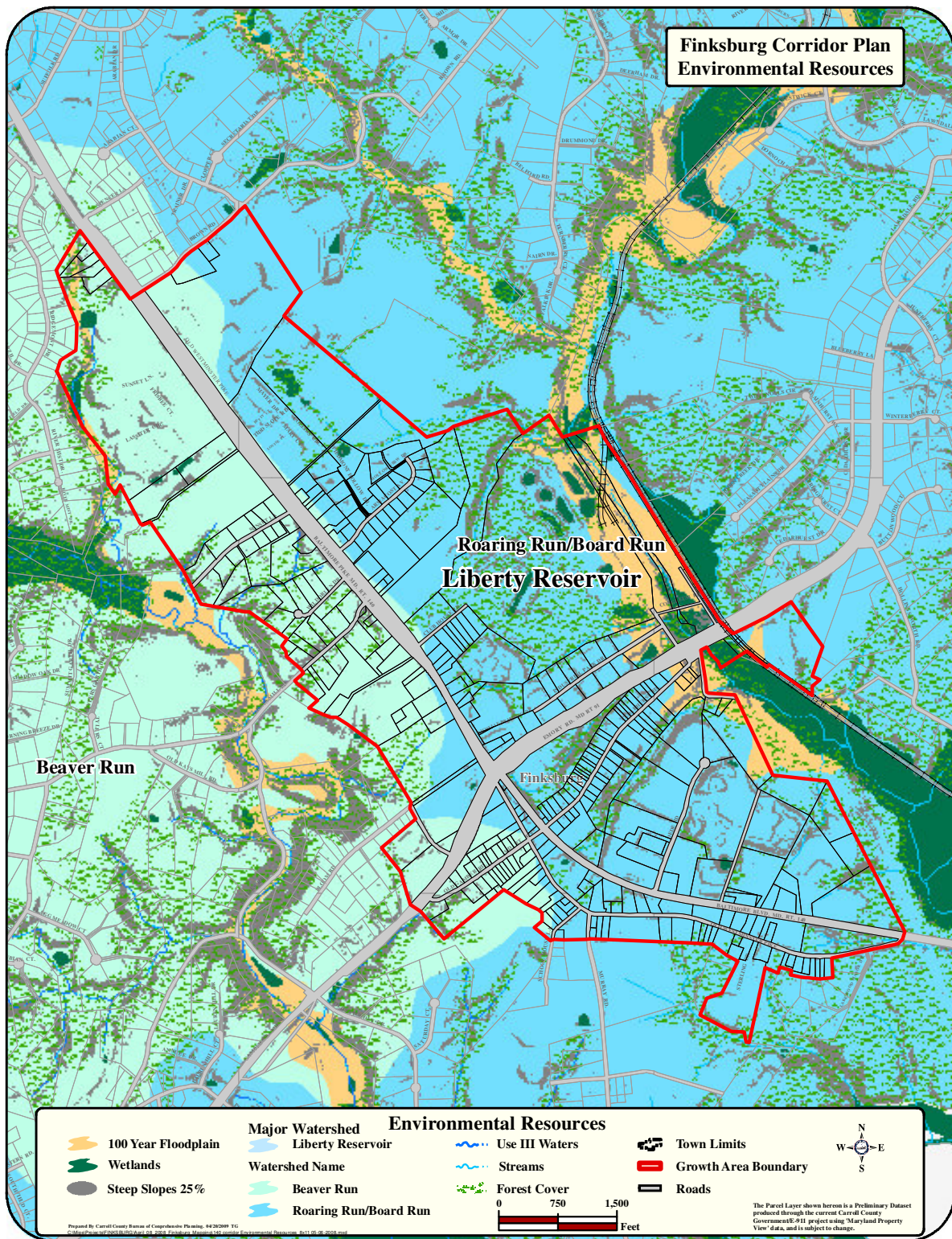


The most significant physical attribute of the Finksburg community that affects the vision and planning for future growth and development is location and proximity to the Liberty Reservoir. The North Branch of the Patapsco River that runs through the Finksburg community is the primary tributary for the reservoir. Liberty Reservoir is a 3,100-acre lake, owned by Baltimore City, which was developed as a public water supply and completed in 1954. The community water system for the Sykesville-Freedom area of Carroll County is served from a direct withdrawal from Liberty Reservoir.

The Finksburg corridor is not served by any public water or sewer systems, even though the commercial and industrial core of Finksburg is located directly adjacent to the North Branch of the Patapsco River as well as Liberty Reservoir itself. All development within the corridor either has a private well and septic system or is served by a private well and a small community wastewater treatment system. Congoleum, Finksburg Plaza, Gerstell Academy, Hillandale Mobile Home Park, and Todd Village Mobile Home Park all have their own treatment plants or septic systems. Much of the development within the gateway area, as well as within the balance of the corridor, predates the creation of the reservoir. As a result, the lot sizes and treatment technologies used present a high risk for contamination since there is little land to replace failing septic systems. The Cedarhurst neighborhood has been identified in the *Carroll County Master Plan for Water and Sewerage* as a community with septic problems, small lots, and limited soil capabilities.

The Carroll County Board of Commissioners has demonstrated a commitment to protecting the water quality within the Liberty Reservoir Watershed through participation with the Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement, first executed in 1979 and most recently reaffirmed in November of 2005. The Agreement establishes a cooperative program that was developed by local governments and key state agencies to monitor and facilitate improved water quality for Loch Raven, Prettyboy, and Liberty reservoirs, which are owned and operated by Baltimore City.

The Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement is implemented by the partners through a series of Action Strategies that specifically outline land use and other measures that will ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the quality of water entering the reservoir. Additionally, in order to prevent further degradation of healthy streams, the State has set limits, called Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), on the amounts of certain pollutants that can enter various stream segments. The type of pollutant, amount allowed, and segment of stream affected by the TMDL varies depending on the specific characteristics of any given water body. Although it is already on the State's list of impaired waters, Liberty Reservoir has no TMDLs set for it at this time.



6 *Gateway*

Finksburg is best known as the crossroads community surrounding the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91, characterized by a small commercial center. MD 140, which is the county's most heavily traveled roadway, enters the county just southeast of the Finksburg commercial and industrial core. As a result, the majority of motorists who enter and exit the county do so by way of this part of Finksburg.

When heading west on MD 140 into Carroll County, just past the Liberty Reservoir, an observer will immediately notice the vast roadway which divides the Finksburg commercial and industrial area. A continuous left-turn lane is coupled with two travel lanes in each direction that were designed for high speeds. A speed limit of 50 miles per hour is posted throughout the Finksburg core. There are no provisions for pedestrian or bicycle traffic in this commercial node.

One very noticeable characteristic of the Carroll County, MD 140 gateway is the abundance of large-scale advertisements that shape the landscape within the corridor. As of January 2008, there were 20 large, off-premise signs within the 1.3-mile stretch of the MD 140 roadway between the Carroll County line and MD 91. These billboards are very prevalent and play a significant role in the remarkable change of scenery when entering and exiting Carroll County.

Lighting within the gateway is managed by individual property owners and is generally oriented to direct motorists' attention onto the businesses.

7 *Aesthetics and Design*

Due to the rolling topography of this region of the county, a number of scenic views are offered along the corridor. Agricultural lands are located within a portion of the corridor and a rural landscape is often evident just beyond some of the residential and commercial uses in this area. Woodlands that can be seen from the corridor are just a sample of those which contribute significantly to the heritage and aesthetic value of this region. The scenic quality of the less intensely developed portions of the corridor illustrates much of the character that is often cited as the most valuable trait of this area.

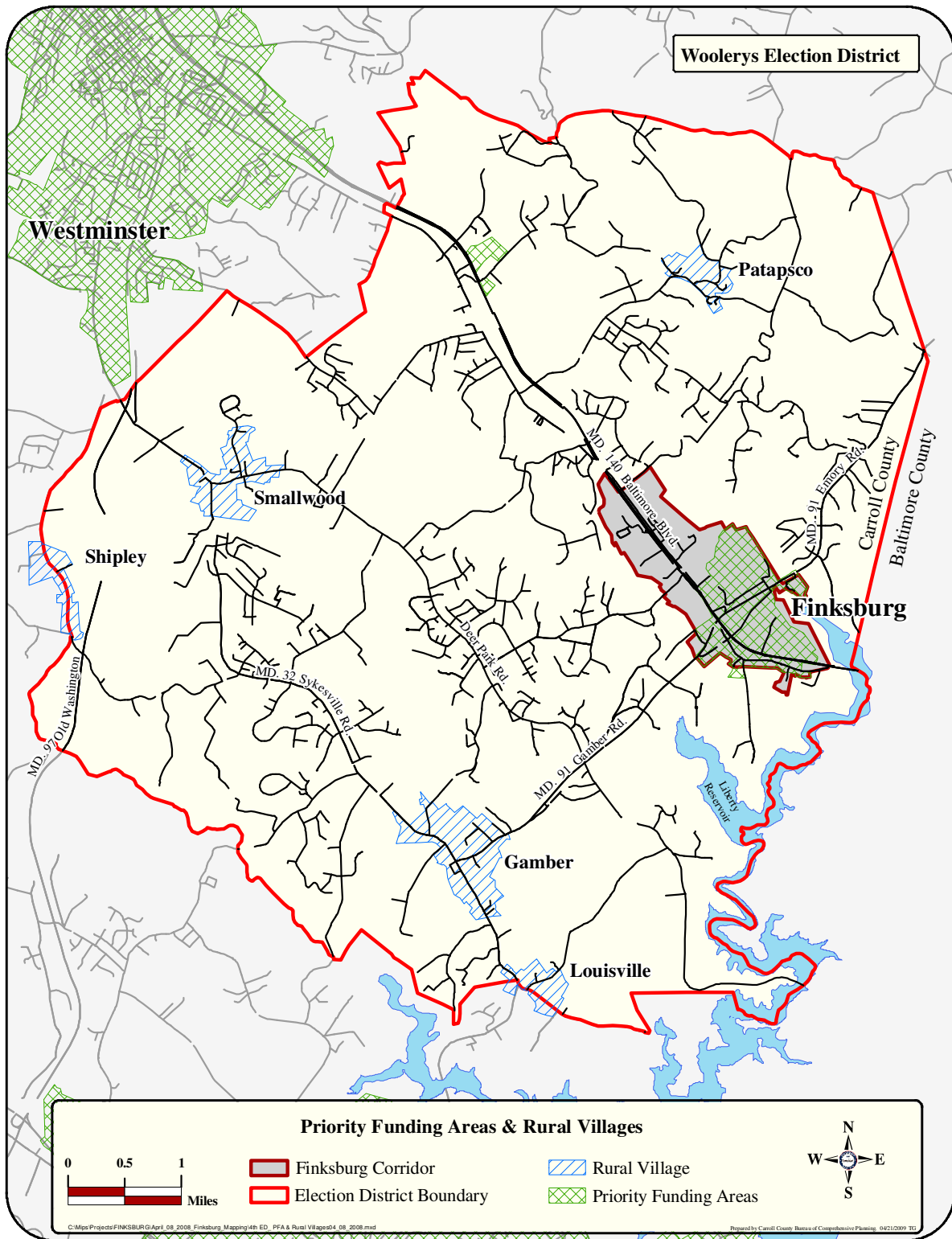
The gateway character described above generally characterizes commercial and industrial development in the balance of the corridor, though it is less intense in nature. Businesses are generally small-scale and do not relate to each other. There is no common design theme, uniform setback or siting, shared parking or access. Institutional uses that include a church, a cemetery, and a private school also lack cohesive design elements. In many instances, pockets of residential development are interspersed with commercial uses oriented to the highway.

Residential development within the MD 140 corridor is principally characterized by post-World War II design, though the Finksburg community itself contains a number of 19th and early 20th century historic buildings that follow a linear pattern of development. Most of the newer residential subdivisions that are located adjacent to the corridor follow a suburban neighborhood

model, which consists of low-density housing comprised of single-family dwellings, large lawns, garages, and carports, curving streets, and cul-de-sac street design.

There are no facilities within the study area that promote pedestrian or bicycle travel. There is limited opportunity for cycling along state and county roadways within the study area. Although MD 91 and MD 140 have ten-foot shoulders, cycling is not practical due to the volume and speed of vehicular traffic. The use of county roadways for recreational cycling is much more practical because of lower speeds and traffic volumes. However, careless driving can easily lead to dangerous situations because bicycles and motorized vehicles must share the roadway.

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❖ Analysis of Community Needs

Input from the property owner survey, community meetings associated with this plan, other Planning staff, and other public agencies was considered in identifying these needs.

1 Land Use

Clearly, the maintenance of productive agricultural lands within the areas that surround the Finksburg corridor is a leading concern with many residents and officials. The preservation of farming land and prevention of residential sprawl were leading concerns in the community input process for this plan. In the past, residential growth within the election district did not fully accomplish this objective. The amount of large-lot, single-family residential land use is second only to agricultural uses, and it is growing much faster than any other district. Because of the lack of public water and sewer systems, it is not possible to concentrate residential growth in appropriate areas. As a result, it is difficult to effectively preserve much of the area's valuable agricultural lands.

The designation of the Finksburg area as a Community Planning Area (CPA) is misleading due to the fact that substantial growth was no longer supported there once the area ceased to be planned for public water and sewer service. Although the Finksburg CPA boundary is utilized for the primary purposes of mapping and long-range planning, it also carries the stigma of being characterized as a growth area. The CPA designation also prevents such properties within that area from being candidates in certain land preservation programs.

One of the major objectives of the *1981 Finksburg Area and Environs Comprehensive Plan* was "to avoid, where possible, strip business development along primary highways in the interest of traffic safety and efficient use of the roadway". The plan additionally sought to maintain a spatial separation between Westminster and Finksburg, preventing unattractive, continuous business development. To accomplish this, portions of undeveloped land that were previously zoned for business use were designated for other uses when the plan was adopted. As a result, some nodes of commercial development are located along MD 140 amidst a residential and rural setting.

As Finksburg and Carroll County in general have consistently grown over the past several decades, demand for housing and business locations has consistently grown as well. This has been particularly true in Finksburg since it is directly connected to the Baltimore metropolitan region via the Northwest Expressway (I-795) and the Baltimore beltway (I-695). The opportunities for business development and redevelopment have been few, however. The absence of public water or sewer service has limited the intensity of commercial, office, and industrial uses possible. Additionally, the amount of undeveloped land devoted to these types of uses was comparatively small even in 1981.

As a result, today there is little land that is available for non-residential development and little incentive to redevelop without public facilities. Yet, the Finksburg corridor is a major gateway into the County and could act as a significant base for employment, professional services and retail.

2 *Transportation*

The extension of Arabian Drive to Brown Road, improvements to Brown Road, and the creation of a “jug handle” service ramp between MD 140 eastbound and MD 91 are among the most significant portions of the planned major street plan that have been implemented since 1981. The business service roads proposed in the vicinities of Suffolk Road and Dede Road have not been constructed, nor has the median that was envisioned along MD 140. As a result, MD 140 continues to have a number of individual business driveways that enter directly onto the roadway rather than being channeled to a signalized intersection. The highway also retains the multiple crossovers that are necessitated by the unrestricted access points along the corridor. The State Highway Administration is in the process of drafting an access management study that will recommend points at which access could be consolidated and service roads that could be constructed to accommodate local traffic as a result.

As noted earlier, the MD 140 corridor carries approximately 45,000 vehicles per day through the Finksburg area. The number of vehicles traveling on this roadway is expected to increase as residential growth in the county and neighboring Pennsylvania expand and job centers in Baltimore City and Baltimore County continue to grow. It is also clear from the Community Survey that residents are greatly concerned about the challenges that increased traffic will bring to the Finksburg community. The County hopes to work with the State Highway Administration to initiate a feasibility study of alternatives for the MD 140/MD 91 intersection. The study would address circulation, safety and aesthetic improvements through the Gateway area. It also would incorporate recommendations for any new service roads or road closures that would be necessitated by the construction of the median along MD 140 from the county line to MD 91.

Regarding the portion of the overall transportation network that serves pedestrians, Finksburg has a severely underdeveloped sidewalk and pathway system. There is extremely limited opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle travel within the commercial center of Finksburg. Furthermore, traffic speeds and volumes along MD 140 make it inhospitable to pedestrians and an inappropriate place to encourage pedestrian activity through the installation of sidewalks. Additionally, very few neighborhoods within the study area offer sidewalks or designated pathways for pedestrian and bicycle travel. According to the Community Survey, participants felt that a bicycle and pedestrian pathway was by far the most needed recreational facility in the community.

3 *Environmental Sensitivity*

Environmental sensitivity poses significant challenges to any commercial and industrial growth and development in this area. Finksburg’s appeal for growth and development has to be balanced with the need for protection of an indispensable public water supply. The lack of public water and sewer service has required on-site waste management and wells. Residents have expressed deep concern for water quality and would like to see additional conservation efforts. This is consistent with the current Action Strategies of the November 2005 Reservoir Watershed Protection Agreement.

Currently, the treatment of sewage and stormwater in the southern end of the Finksburg Corridor poses a substantial potential hazard to the Liberty Reservoir. In the absence of a community sewage system that can be properly managed, the potential for ground and surface water contamination is elevated.

Many of the well-established commercial and industrial enterprises within the Finksburg core were not constructed with effective stormwater management and wastewater controls. Additionally, current regulations that apply to new development would likely limit the extent and potential impact of these uses on the environment. Although County regulations were updated in 2004 and are considered to be very strong for this region, there may remain additional measures that can be taken within the corridor to decrease environmental impact with new and/or existing development and/or redevelopment, most specifically in the areas of stormwater management and landscaping.

However, the easiest and most effective way to bring about this change is through the development review process. If a property is redeveloped (or is being developed for the first time), it will be subject to site plan review and approval. Through this process, the County and State can require that certain improvements be made to the waste disposal and stormwater management systems, among other things. In this way, state-of-the-art technologies for reducing or eliminating the migration of pollutants into surface and ground water sources can be utilized. In order for this to occur though, there first must be an incentive for property owners to redevelop, and it is unlikely that this will occur if individual septic systems are the only options for waste disposal. This is due to the soil conditions in the area that make on-site disposal difficult and land-consumptive. As a result, redevelopment most likely will depend upon the provision of a community septic system.

At the same time, the Action Strategies that implement the Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement have significant impacts on how land use and wastewater treatment issues can be addressed in the corridor. The “2005 Action Strategy for the Reservoir Watersheds” document contains a number of strategies directly relevant to land use planning in the Finksburg corridor. They include:

Section 2.0 Point Source Management

(2) Policy for **new** municipal discharges in the watersheds: The Department of the Environment (MDE), through its NPDES permit program, will discourage new discharges exceeding 1,000 gpd, except as needed to correct failing septic systems. In those cases, MDE will encourage land treatment of the plant effluent.

(3) MDE, through its NPDES permit program, will discourage discharges from package sewage treatment plants intended to serve new residential communities and proposed to discharge in the reservoir watersheds.

(4) Policy for **existing** industrial discharges in the watersheds: MDE, through its NPDES permit program, will set a phosphorus limit of 0.3 mg/l effluent concentration when each permit comes up for renewal, if phosphorus is present at any significant level in the waste stream.

(5) Policy for **new** industrial discharges in the watersheds: MDE, through its NPDES permit program, will discourage significant phosphorus discharges to the reservoir watersheds.

(6) When a phosphorus loading goal has been established through the TMDL process (see item 1.2.1) for each reservoir, MDE, through its NPDES permit program, will not permit an increase in the total phosphorus load delivered to the reservoirs.

Section 3.6 Land-Use Planning and Zoning

(3) Baltimore and Carroll Counties will maintain the current extent of conservation and agricultural zoning in the reservoir watersheds, insofar as possible.

(4) Baltimore and Carroll Counties will protect the reservoir watersheds by limiting insofar as possible additional urban development zoning within the reservoir watersheds.

Although some work has been performed, a continued need exists to assess and monitor the stream corridors within the community in order to determine potential contamination sources and consider mitigation strategies. The complexity of the issues surrounding redevelopment, point source pollution management, and overall land use in the Finksburg corridor makes it imperative that a comprehensive approach to wastewater and stormwater management be taken in this area.

4 Gateway

The community expressed, through the community meetings, surveys, and interviews, that Finksburg does not present a welcoming and attractive gateway to the county. Many feel that motorists gain the initial impression that the county is littered with large billboards and unattractive businesses. As the primary doorway to the county, Finksburg leaves many with a negative impression because of its unattractive landscape. An overwhelming number of the residents surveyed identified the Finksburg community with a rural atmosphere that is quiet and safe. This strong feeling of community pride is not well represented by the Finksburg gateway. A thriving, small-town ambiance with the feeling of a close-knit community built upon an agricultural heritage would more closely represent the nature of Carroll County and the atmosphere residents desire.

For the most part, the MD 140 roadway within the Finksburg area adequately serves its primary function of traffic movement. Movement through the area during rush hours can be difficult, however, with lengthy waits at signalized intersections. In order to provide for the needs of the community, and the surrounding region, the capacity and functionality of the corridor as a major arterial must be maintained and enhanced.

The MD 140 corridor, specifically the portion that is part of the Finksburg core, does not effectively provide a secondary function of community enrichment. The amount of paved surfaces and lack of quality landscaping and architecture on any given site detract from the reinforcement of the historic Finksburg community and its expansion and/or the creation of a contemporary corridor community. The nature of the roadway and the uninviting character of the gateway deter potential customers and businesses alike from this strategically located commercial center.

In 1999, McDearman Associates prepared a *Carroll County Situational Assessment* for the Economic Development Commission. This assessment outlines the strengths and

weaknesses of business attraction and retention. In referring to the marketing aspect of potential firms, the report indicates that:

Primary gateways into Carroll County do not show well nor serve to present the impression that the County is suitable as a professional or high-tech business location. A prospect's first impression of the county entering via MD 140 is of billboards and haphazard retail development. While the townships and rural character outside of these gateways are typically pleasant, the first impression is often most lasting.

The existing character of the Finksburg gateway is not appealing to the most desirable and appropriate types of non-residential development which would otherwise be attracted to the many advantages of the area. It should be noted that in early 2009 the Board of County Commissioners approved the construction of two gateway monument signs to be erected in Finksburg and the Freedom area. These signs will help to create a more welcoming and attractive entrance to the County at two of its most prominent entry points.

The automobile is the only safe option for movement within this area. As a commercial area that offers a variety of retail goods and services, there is no opportunity for pedestrian movement. The area does not offer a shopping district with a variety of pedestrian circulation avenues that can significantly reduce automobile usage for adjacent parcel access. In order to ensure a viable retail sector, the opportunities for pedestrian movement must be strongly considered.

There is minimal effort to provide landscaping or lighting control within the Finksburg commercial area to enhance the appearance of the MD 140 corridor. In general, businesses adjacent to MD 140, between the county line and MD 91, do not maintain vegetation that would provide screening or create some visual variety. During the nighttime hours, the Finksburg commercial area features haphazard lighting that diminishes any aesthetic appeal. Few measures are taken to soften or limit the impact on surrounding properties. As an effect of this disorganized and seemingly unregulated practice, light pollution within the gateway to Carroll County further contributes to the uninviting features of the area.

There are some structures within the gateway that have redeeming architectural and design features, although most buildings lack any distinguishing elements. Despite several historic buildings that could serve as precedent, the area lacks a building design theme or design standards that would serve to create a more attractive gateway as new businesses locate in the area. A recently enacted Gateway Renovation Tax Credit will allow property owners to obtain tax credits for enhanced landscaping or site features, and architectural or structural improvements. The tax credit program makes property improvements more financially realistic and entirely voluntary. Additionally, in April 2009, the Board of County Commissioners enacted a Green Building Tax Credit that allows for property tax credits of 25%, 50% and 75%, respectively, on property improvements certified as meeting LEED® Silver, Gold, and Platinum (or equivalent) standards. This credit should provide additional incentive for redevelopment that also is complimentary to the sensitive quality of the surrounding natural environment in Finksburg.

The relatively small area (approximately 420 total acres) of business and light industrial zoned land that is located near the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91 has tremendous potential for providing valuable assets to the community in an environmentally-friendly fashion. The area is located within close proximity to major regional thoroughfares and is, therefore, one of the most heavily traveled gateway communities in Carroll County.

⇒ Character Area Analysis

Within the Finksburg gateway, four distinct character areas have been identified. Though different in character, these areas have been targeted collectively for a coordinated and integrated approach to revitalization through incentives and improvement projects (see Recommended Actions for the Gateway). The following section provides a description of each small area and a vision for its future. In order to implement projects that will move us toward the vision for each area, design criteria for each are provided as a component of the recommended actions within the plan. It is important that any redevelopment initiatives for these areas be specific and comprehensive, and that development proceed only in adherence to the vision and design criteria.

Character Descriptions

CHARACTER AREA #1 – COMMERCIAL CORE FINKSBURG

This character area, designated as the Commercial Core, includes land that is primarily located north of MD 140 and surrounding Dede Road

Character Area #1 Features

- The land area is comprised of approximately 68 acres of larger parcels (up to 11 acres in size).
- The area is characterized primarily by commercial and light industrial uses.
- Commercial development within this area has been in place for many decades.
- One vacant piece of land surrounds the post office.
- Recent development and improvements to this area have been minimal at best, with the exception of the Walnut Park Plaza shopping center now under construction.
- Commercial development is not connected and lacks architectural cohesiveness.
- Landscaped buffers and plantings along the frontage of MD 140 are severely limited to non-existent.
- Uncontrolled parcel access has been permitted along MD 140. The many curb cuts along the roadway create tremendous potential for vehicular conflicts.
- MD 140 is a five-lane highway in this area, with two through lanes in each direction and a continuous center turn lane. The intersection of MD 140 and Dede Road is signalized.
- Industrial uses located on Dede Road contribute a significant amount of heavy truck traffic utilizing the MD 140/Dede Road intersection.
- The area is unincorporated and all parcels are served by individual well and septic systems.
- The Cedarhurst neighborhood, located directly adjacent to this area, has been identified as a septic problem area.
- This area has a direct environmental impact on Liberty Reservoir, a regional drinking water supply located immediately adjacent to the area.

CHARACTER AREA #2 – RETAIL CENTER FINKSBURG

This character area, designated as Retail Center Finksburg, includes land that is primarily located south of MD 140 and east of the planned Dede Road extension.

Character Area #2 Features

- The land area is comprised of approximately 10 acres of smaller parcels (no larger than 3 acres in size) with good redevelopment potential.
- The area is characterized by medium-scale commercial uses situated between portions of two parallel roadways, MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike.
- There is no residential development in this area, but residential uses line the opposite side Old Westminster Pike, facing the rear of the highway-oriented commercial uses.
- The area is located along MD 140, one of Carroll County's primary gateway corridors. MD 140 is a five-lane highway in this area, with two through lanes in each direction and a continuous center turn lane.
- The development is not connected and lacks architectural cohesiveness.
- The development within this area has been in place for many decades.
- There is no vacant land within this small area.
- Recent development and improvements to this area have been minimal.
- Parcels have frontage on both MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike. Direct and primary access to each parcel is provided from MD 140.
- The area is unincorporated and all parcels are served by individual well and septic systems.
- The Cedarhurst neighborhood that is located on the north side of MD 140 has been identified as a septic problem area.
- This area has a direct environmental impact on Liberty Reservoir, a regional drinking water supply located immediately adjacent to the area.

CHARACTER AREA #3 – MAIN STREET FINKSBURG

This character area, designated as Main Street Finksburg, includes land that is primarily located south of MD 140, west of the planned Dede Road extension and surrounding a segment of Old Gamber Road.

Character Area #3 Features

- The land area is comprised of approximately 20 acres of medium-sized parcels (no larger than 6 acres in size) with good redevelopment potential.
- The area is characterized by small and medium-scale commercial uses, a church, and a limited amount of residential use.
- A vast majority of the commercial and residential development within this area has been in place for many decades.
- A few vacant pieces of land are scattered through this small area.
- Recent development and improvements to this area have been minimal at best.
- The area is located adjacent to MD 140, Carroll County's primary gateway. MD 140 is a five-lane highway in this area, with two through lanes in each direction and a continuous center turn lane. The intersection of MD 140 and Cedarhurst Road/Old Gamber Road is unsignalized, while the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91 is signalized.
- The intersection of MD 140 and MD 91 is a major intersection, handling large volumes of passenger vehicle and heavy truck traffic. Left turns from MD 140 eastbound onto MD 91 northbound are prohibited; traffic must use a "jug handle" road to access MD 91 northbound south of the actual intersection.
- The development is not connected and lacks architectural cohesiveness.

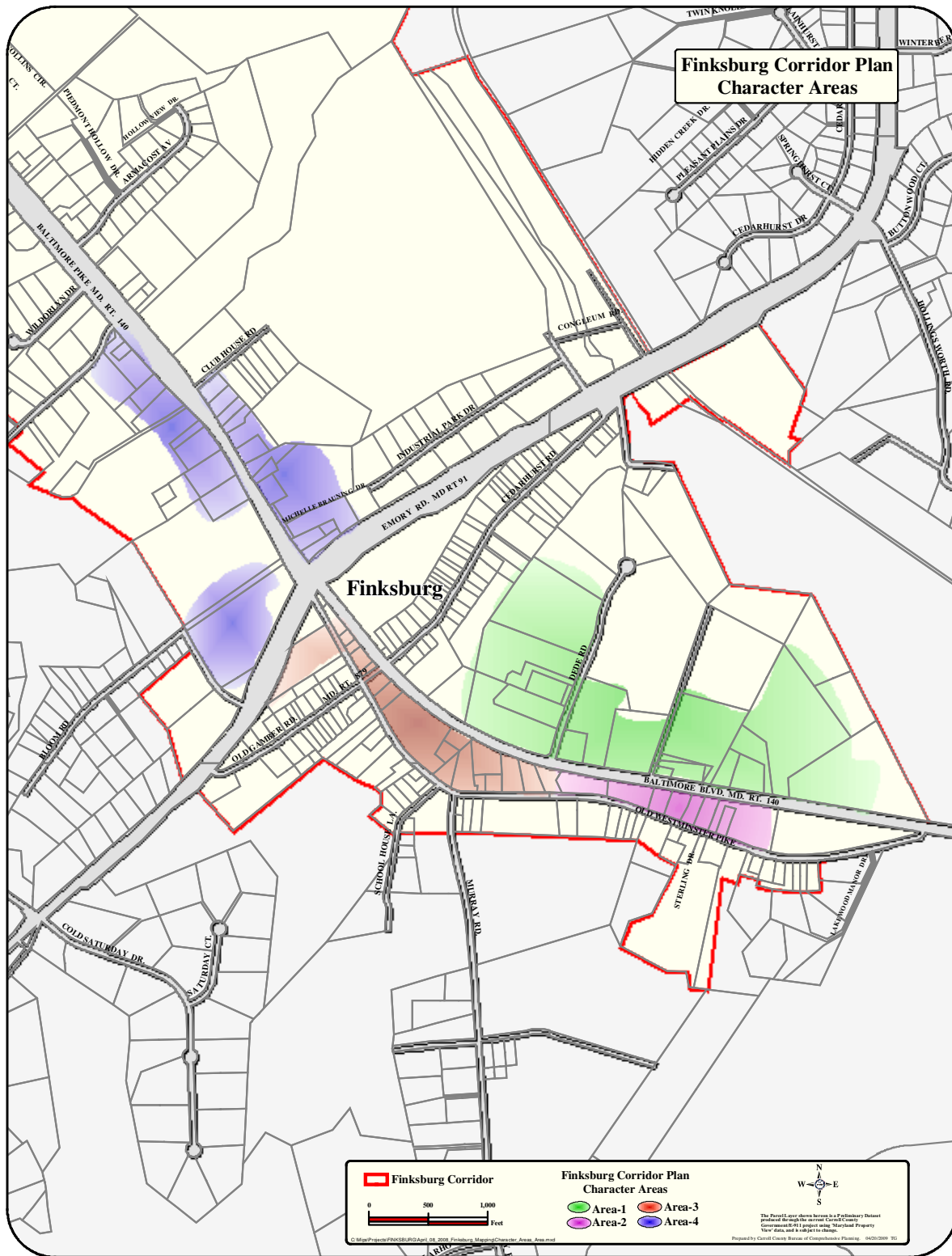
- The area is unincorporated and all parcels are served by individual well and septic systems.
- The Cedarhurst neighborhood, located on the north side of MD 140 and directly adjacent to this area, has been identified as a septic problem area.
- This area has a direct environmental impact on Liberty Reservoir, a regional drinking water supply located immediately adjacent to the area.

CHARACTER AREA #4 – FINKSBURG SHOPS

This character area, designated as Finksburg Shops, includes land that surrounds MD 140 and lies just west of MD 91.

Character Area #4 Features

- The land area is comprised of approximately 40 acres of small and medium-sized parcels (no larger than 9 acres in size) with some redevelopment potential.
- The area is characterized by small and medium-scale commercial uses and a limited amount of residential use.
- A vast majority of the development within this area has been in place for many years. A limited amount of new development is present.
- One parcel of vacant land is located in this small area.
- The area is located adjacent to MD 140, Carroll County's primary gateway. MD 140 is a five-lane highway in this area, with two through lanes in each direction.
- The signalized intersection of MD 140 and MD 91 is a major intersection, handling large volumes of passenger vehicle and heavy truck traffic. Direct left turns from MD 140 eastbound onto MD 91 northbound are prohibited; traffic must utilize a "jug handle" road to access MD 91 northbound south of the actual intersection.
- Most of the development in this area is not connected and lacks architectural cohesiveness.
- The area is unincorporated and all parcels are served by individual well and septic systems.
- The Cedarhurst neighborhood, located on the north side of MD 140 and directly adjacent to this area, has been identified as a septic problem area.
- This area has a direct environmental impact on Liberty Reservoir, a regional drinking water supply located immediately adjacent to the area.



Overall Vision for Gateway Areas

Gateway areas will feature subdued site lighting, limited signage, and enhanced landscaping along the MD 140 roadway. The need to minimize environmental impacts will necessitate extraordinary environmental protection measures and creative land planning and design. The use of green building technologies will also be a top priority for these redevelopment areas. The realization of this redevelopment approach will result in improved protection measures for the Liberty Reservoir. A master plan approach to development will be applied to the entire area to achieve a cohesive sense of place and community and to pool the opportunities presented by the total land area while overcoming obstacles posed by individual parcels. These areas may, in the future, be served by a community public water and/or sewer system to address the need to improve water quality and reduce environmental impacts in this sensitive region.

Character Area Visions

CHARACTER AREA #1 – COMMERCIAL CORE FINKSBURG

This area will be an example of how redevelopment can occur that respects the environment, showcases a contemporary example of successful mixed-use development, and capitalizes on location. The mix of commercial, office, and industrial uses will guide the creation of an attractive, walkable business campus.

CHARACTER AREA #2 – RETAIL CENTER FINKSBURG

This area will be an example of how redevelopment can occur that respects the environment, showcases a contemporary example of successful commercial development, and capitalizes on location. The mix of retail, commercial, and office uses will guide the creation of an attractive, pedestrian-scale center that complements the residential nature of development on the opposite side of Old Westminster Pike.

CHARACTER AREA #3 – MAIN STREET FINKSBURG

This area will be an example of how redevelopment can occur that respects the environment, showcases a contemporary example of successful mixed-use development, and capitalizes on location. The mix of neighborhood commercial, office, and residential uses will guide the creation of an attractive, walkable community.

CHARACTER AREA #4 – FINKSBURG SHOPS

This area will be an example of how redevelopment can occur that respects the environment and capitalizes on location. The mix of neighborhood commercial and office uses will guide the creation of an attractive, walkable business community.

5 *Aesthetics and Design*

Despite that fact that Finksburg is one of the county's major gateways, it is not known for its attractive or welcoming environment. On the contrary, it has one of the highest concentrations

of billboard advertisements in the county, is exceptionally lacking in landscaping, and exhibits very little in the way of cohesive design. The historic community of Finksburg contains a number of attractive buildings, but design elements from these buildings typically have not been carried through to more contemporary construction. Nor have these more modern buildings been noteworthy in their own design. However, the area's newest buildings, including Smoker's Barbeque and Walnut Park Plaza, demonstrate that greater attention is starting to be paid to design. Additionally, the Board of County Commissioners' 2003 decision to restrict billboards to 32 square feet in area and 10 feet in height is evidence of a growing awareness about the need to address aesthetic issues in Carroll County.

When viewed as a group, businesses within the Finksburg corridor do not complement each other well. Other than being closely situated, there is little that unites the various businesses lining the highway. There are very few instances of joint access for businesses, and this disconnection can be confusing and uninviting. The lack of a well-defined, cohesive business destination within the community is likely deterring many potential customers.

Very little exists in the way of vehicular connectivity, and bicycle and pedestrian links are virtually non-existent. This results in a fragmented experience when traveling through the area or attempting to get from one place of business to another. It also means that the residential areas surrounding the corridor have no connection to the places where they shop and dine locally.

All of these conditions detract from any effort to create a "sense of community" in Finksburg. When there is little in the way of appealing destinations in the area, and those that are appealing are difficult to reach, it becomes very challenging to build an environment where people want to go and with which they want to identify themselves. It also does little to motivate property owners to update or enhance their properties, and does not encourage new investment either.

❖ **Recommended Actions**

Land Use

1. Remove the Community Planning Area (CPA) designation from the Carroll County comprehensive plan for the Finksburg area

Amending the Carroll County comprehensive plan to remove the Finksburg CPA designation will reflect the policy initiatives that have been in place which recognize that the area is not slated for significant growth. Since CPA's are commonly referred to as growth areas within the county, the designation can be misrepresented during discussion and decision-making. This change to the Carroll County comprehensive plan will help to correct misunderstandings and present a clear picture that Finksburg is not supported as a significant growth area within the county.

2. Implement the 2005 Action Strategy for the Reservoir Watersheds through compatible land use designations

Section 3.6 Land-Use Planning and Zoning contains the following strategies:

- (3) Baltimore and Carroll Counties will maintain the current extent of conservation and agricultural zoning in the reservoir watersheds, insofar as possible.
- (4) Baltimore and Carroll Counties will protect the reservoir watersheds by limiting insofar as possible additional urban development zoning within the reservoir watersheds.

The Finksburg Corridor Plan proposes very little change to the land areas already zoned for Conservation and Agriculture Resource Protection land uses. Approximately 30 acres of land currently zoned Conservation have been designated for employment use. The changes related to areas currently zoned for commercial, residential and industrial uses will not significantly alter the existing urbanization potential. These areas already are designated and zoned for some type of development. The most significant change in this respect is 27 acres surrounding a small pocket of undeveloped commercial land that are proposed to change from medium and low density residential designations to a commercial designation.

The changes to the Conservation and Residential zoned land would mean that the number of potential new dwelling units on private wells and septic systems would be reduced by approximately 50-65. This would have positive environmental effects. Furthermore, it is hoped that the land use changes recommended in this plan will encourage redevelopment, thereby presenting an opportunity to improve the environmental impacts of individual sites through the application of current regulations and policies.

3. Provide for a distinct separation between activity centers through zoning designations

It is a concern of residents of the community that the area between Westminster and the Finksburg community is developing in a way that would cause the two communities to eventually be contiguous, with no break of the built environment in between. Effective zoning designations between the communities would help to prevent this from happening.

Additional measures to consider in this area could include the purchase of easements on property, which would be allowed once the areas outside of the corridor are removed from the growth area, and the development of park land.

4. Support the Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area to preserve farmland through the continued solicitation of State funding as well as locally donated easements

Through the plan development process, residents credited the rural atmosphere with being a major contributor to the quality of life in the community. The County should continue to support the purchase and donation of development rights through the Rural Legacy program. Preserving the land that surrounds the Finksburg corridor will protect its rural context and benefit the health of the Liberty Reservoir. Additionally, purchase of easements on eligible properties north of the corridor would help to maintain open space in that area of the county and ensure a distinct buffer between the Finksburg community and Hampstead. Each of these things would help to preserve the character of the community and its rural atmosphere.

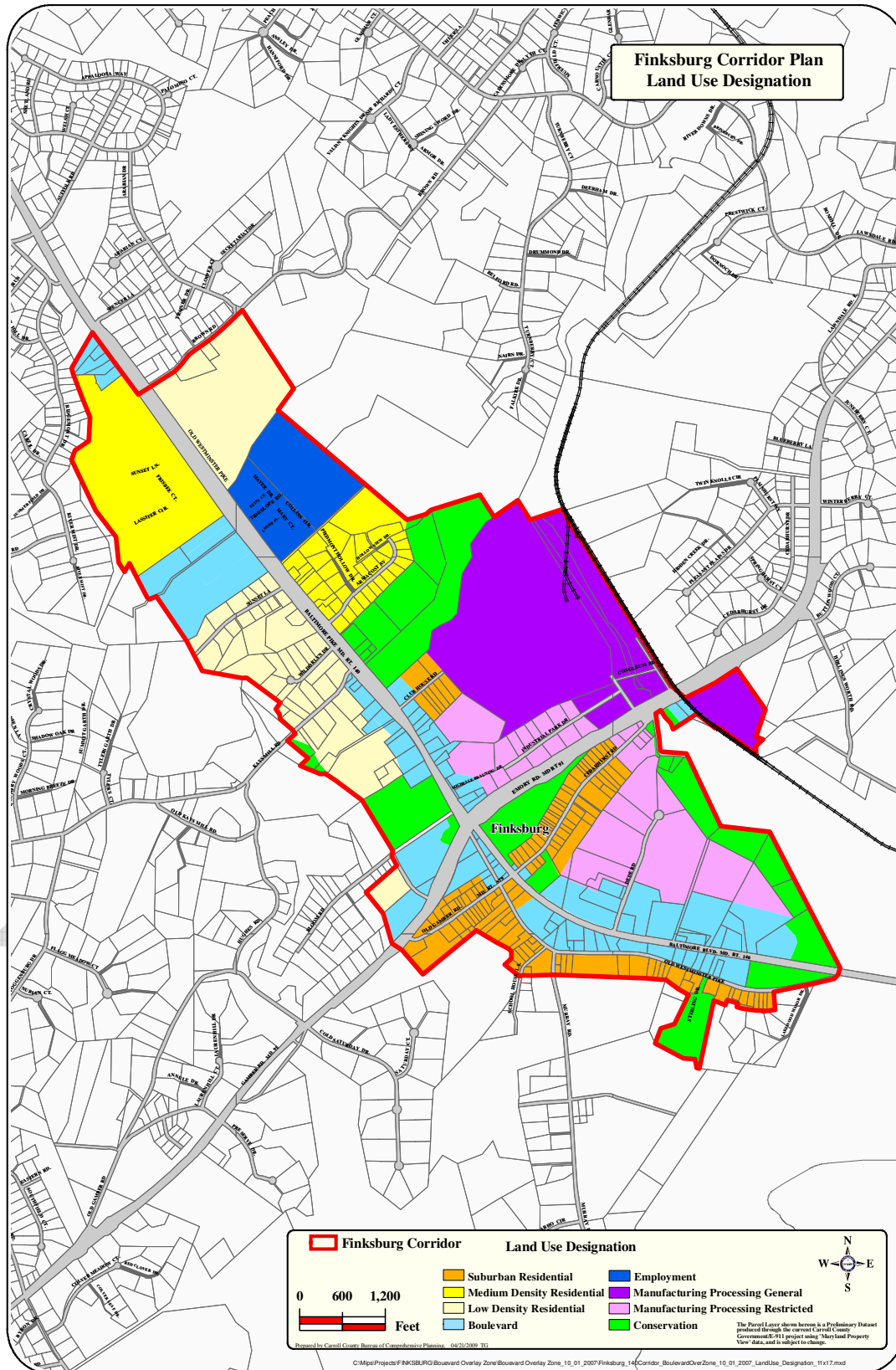
5. Revise the boundary of the Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area to include well-suited farmland that was previously within the Community Planning Area

The removal of the Finksburg Community Planning Area designation would open the opportunity for additional properties to be included in the Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area. Properties that are within a designated growth area can not be considered for Rural Legacy funding.

6. Adopt a Boulevard zoning district to be applied in the area designated for Boulevard on the Corridor Plan land use designations map

The adoption of a new zoning district will be a major component of planning efforts and incentives to enhance the appearance and functionality of the corridor. Text for a proposed Boulevard zoning district can be found in the appendix. This district will provide additional regulatory controls to shape the location and character of new development and redevelopment. The new zoning designation will require specific enhancements and considerations as a part of site development.

The Boulevard zoning district is designed to promote quality development that takes advantage of the many benefits associated with an active transportation corridor. The zoning district considers elements of site layout such as parking requirements and design, building setback and location, pedestrian accommodations, and site access. The district supports appropriately screened and landscaped parking areas that help to improve the nature of a parking lot. The district also places a high degree of emphasis on building placement and site layout that can play a significant role in strengthening community character.



7. Implement design guidelines for the MD 140 Corridor

With assistance from the Finksburg community, design guidelines for the Finksburg Corridor have been drafted. Through renderings and photographs, the guidelines describe the preferred components and look of new development and redevelopment within the Finksburg Corridor. These guidelines provide developers and designers with a visual representation of the preferred development character, to achieve design and landscaping that will enhance the aesthetic quality of the corridor.

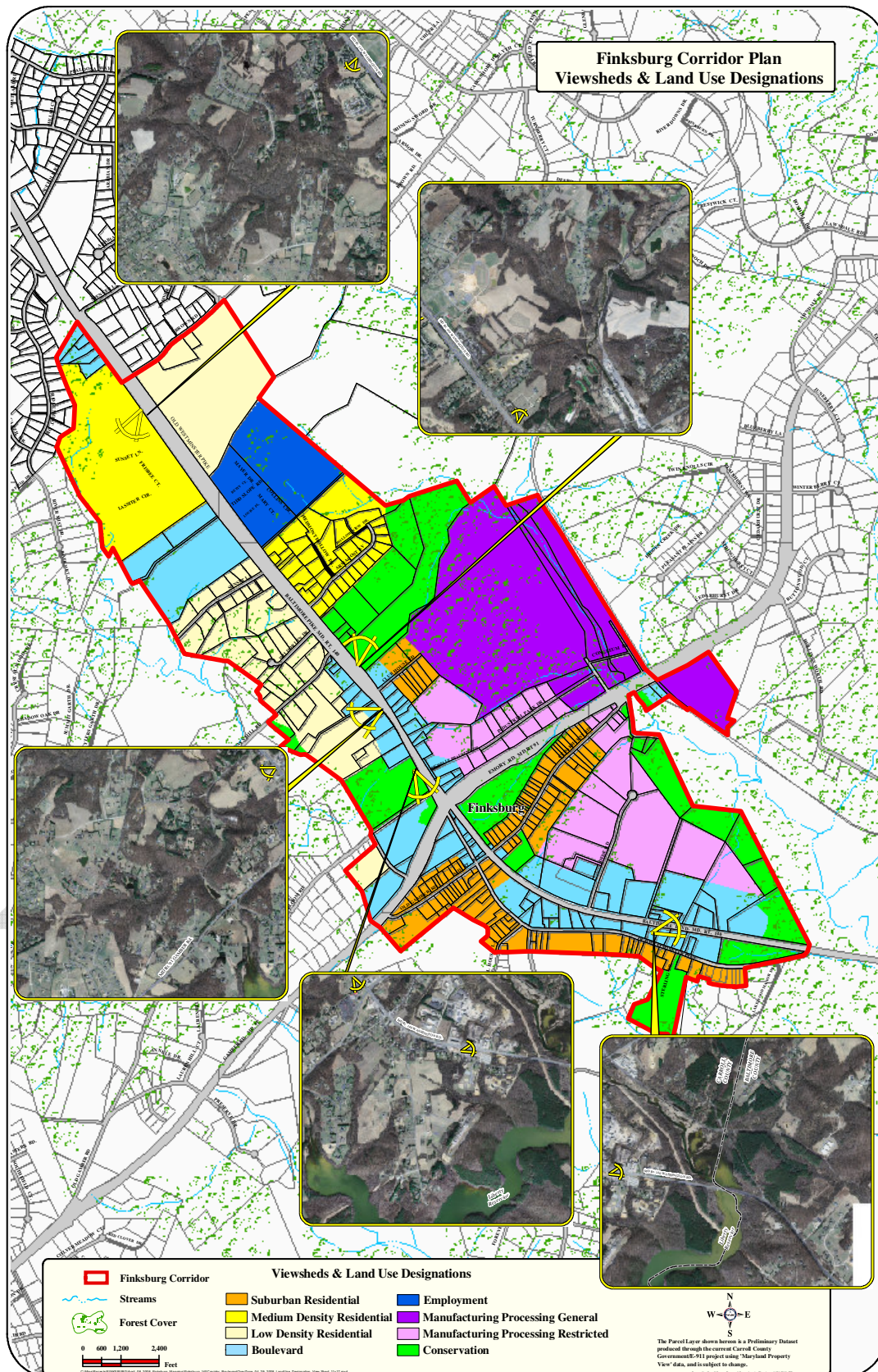
A copy of the draft design guidelines can be found in the appendix.

8. Maintain viewsheds and the visual connection to forests and open space

Although the Finksburg corridor itself is not rural, it does offer glimpses to the surrounding countryside that hint at the more rural context within which the corridor lies. Maintaining the long views to forests and fields will help to keep this context as a reference point for those moving through the area.

In order to retain the viewsheds shown on the following map and promote a connection to a more pastoral context, development projects within the corridor should:

- Use site layout and building design to retain and emphasize existing views;
- Preserve to the greatest extent possible existing green, open spaces along the MD 140 corridor;
- Minimize the addition of paved surfaces by creating shared access and parking and internal circulation networks; and,
- Create opportunities to conveniently and safely access the surrounding area by foot and bicycle.



Transportation

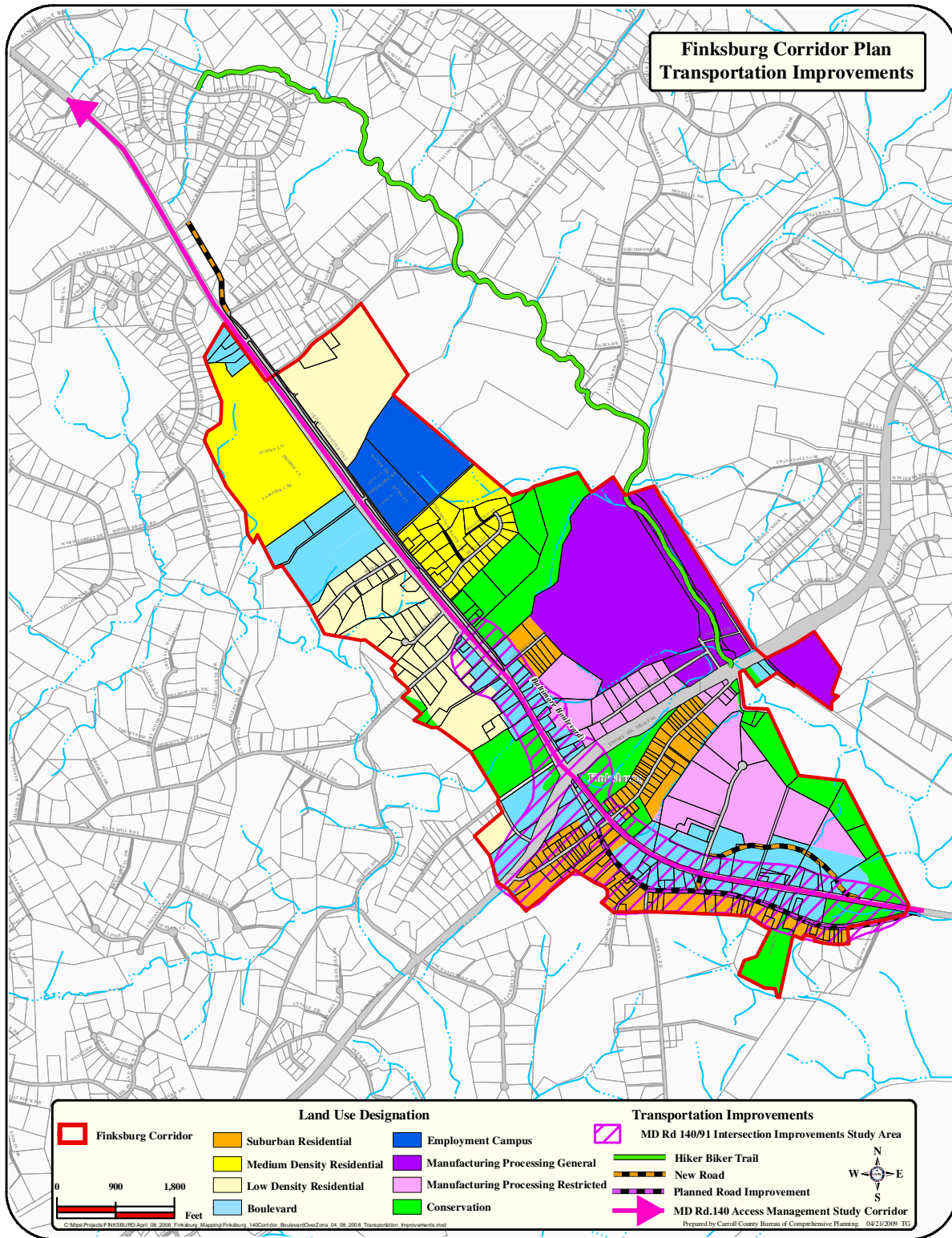
1. Coordinate with SHA to conduct an alternatives feasibility study of the MD 140/MD 91 intersection and to complete an access management study of the entire MD 140 corridor

The County is in the process of developing a scope of work with SHA to conduct an analysis of various alternatives for addressing conditions at the MD 140/MD 91 intersection. The goal is to develop several alternatives for addressing traffic safety and congestion at the intersection, including the possibility of a grade-separated interchange. The study will take into consideration resulting modifications that may be required to local roads along the corridor from the Carroll County/Baltimore County line in the east to Kays Mill Road in the west. It also will take into consideration improvements planned as part of SHA's MD 140 Corridor Enhancements project. The hope is to have the study become the basis for a seamless transition between planning at the concept level and the implementation of specific projects. The desired end product is a document that will:

1. Identify several potential alternative intersection configurations, along with any associated secondary roadway modifications;
2. Recommend a preferred configuration and modifications;
3. Provide a list of constraints for the preferred location; and
4. Develop conceptual land acquisition, design/engineering, and construction cost estimates for logical project phases.

Additionally, the County should continue to coordinate with SHA on the completion of an access management study for the entire MD 140 corridor from the reservoir to Market Street in Westminster. This study will recommend points at which direct access onto MD 140 can be eliminated, as well as options for creating secondary access roads that would direct traffic to consolidated, signalized intersections instead. The objective is to reduce the potential for accidents and improve the overall flow of traffic along the corridor, both of which are compromised by the numerous individual driveways that access directly onto MD 140.

The access management study and the alternatives feasibility study are mutually supportive. Improvements to the MD 140/MD 91 intersection almost certainly will involve modifications to the access points in the immediate vicinity, which will have broader implications for circulation throughout the corridor. Therefore, conducting both of these studies so that they respond to each other is essential.



2. Implement the proposed roadway projects contained in this plan

Ever-mounting traffic volumes and concerns about traffic safety along the MD 140 corridor in Finksburg mean that a comprehensive approach to regulating access, flow and capacity is becoming critical. The roadway projects proposed in this plan will create essential connections that not only will improve traffic safety, circulation, and capacity, but also will be the impetus for redevelopment, particularly in the gateway area.

Extension of Dede Road – The purpose of this new roadway is to create a connection between MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike to facilitate the critical “rear access” condition needed to limit or close access points on MD 140 for businesses fronting on that road. The new road would align across from Dede Road at the signalized intersection on MD 140. It would be approximately 264 feet in length, closed-section, and would have sidewalk on both sides of the road. The construction of this road is envisioned as a publicly-funded capital project.

Industrial Park Internal Circulation Road – The purpose of this new roadway is to create an internal means of circulation through the industrial/commercial area located on the north side of MD 140 between Liberty Reservoir and Dede Road. This would create greater opportunity for redevelopment, and would allow for an alternate means of access to properties fronting on MD 140 so that existing direct access onto that road eventually can be limited or closed altogether. The new road would have one point of access from MD 140 at its eastern terminus (preferably right-in/right-out), and would connect to Dede Road at its western terminus, allowing traffic to access MD 140 at a signalized intersection. This road would be approximately 2,640 feet in length, closed-section, with sidewalk on both sides of the road. Although an open-section roadway in this area could have benefits for stormwater management, this type of section would require a much greater right-of-way width that could limit the development potential of properties fronting on the road. An open-section road also makes it more difficult to locate sidewalk within the right-of-way. Sidewalk is envisioned for this area to promote pedestrian connections between individual sites.

Improvements to Old Westminster Pike – The purpose of this project is to make improvements to Old Westminster Pike that would enhance the functionality, aesthetics, and pedestrian accessibility of the roadway. This is particularly important given that it will function as a primary means of access to businesses if/when access directly off of MD 140 is limited. The project would include approximately 5,544 feet of roadway and consist of resurfacing and construction of sidewalk, curb and gutter.

MD 140/MD 91 Intersection Improvements Feasibility Study and Access Management Study – These studies are described in more detail above.

Extension of Old Westminster Pike to connect with Suffolk Road – The purpose of this new roadway is to create a direct connection from Old Westminster Pike to Suffolk Road, allowing motorists who use Old Westminster Pike to be directed to a signalized intersection from which MD 140 east and westbound can be accessed. The creation of this connection would present an opportunity to eliminate some of the dangerous crossovers that currently

exist to provide access between MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike. This road would be approximately 1,530 feet in length with an open-section. It is anticipated that the new road would maintain essentially the same cross-section as the existing Old Westminster Pike.

3. Construct bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and between the commercial center, residential areas, and activity centers

To facilitate additional mitigation of traffic congestion, measures to promote alternative modes of transportation also should be implemented. In addition to providing a social connection between residential areas and activity centers, appropriate locations for bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be identified and constructed to provide residents with alternatives to driving to stores, neighbors' houses, and other destinations.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths could be constructed to connect existing neighborhoods both to each other as well as to the activity centers. Such facilities would provide connections for alternative modes of transportation as well as provide additional recreation opportunities. A strong local desire for these facilities is indicated in the community survey that was conducted during the winter of 2000.

In order for pedestrian and bicycle pathways to be utilized best, they should connect with other public facilities. This makes the pathway most accessible and also provides additional opportunities to take advantage of community facilities. A number of roadways in the area are well suited for the addition of bike lanes and/or separated pathways. There is a need to provide bikeways as a part of existing local roadways. This improvement would provide cyclists with safe recreation and exercise and increased access to the community activity centers, and would encourage non-motorized travel in the area.

One bicycle/pedestrian pathway is proposed to follow Roaring Run and a portion of the North Branch Patapsco River, connecting residential areas of Sandymount to MD 91. The path, estimated at about 19,000 feet (3.6 miles) long, would be a 10-foot wide macadam trail. Obtaining right-of-way for this project would best be accomplished through dedicated easements as new development occurs within the vicinity of the pathway alignment, though some portions of this alignment are already developed.

4. Construct sidewalks to improve pedestrian access, circulation, and safety

Many areas of the community are not connected by sidewalks. Sidewalks connecting large residential areas and commercial areas are especially important. Areas where sidewalks could be constructed to help provide better circulation and access for pedestrians to these locations should be identified. While it may be difficult or impossible to install sidewalks in some of the large subdivisions that have already been developed, consideration should be given to requiring them in any new developments within the corridor. At a minimum, easements for sidewalks can be required as part of the site plan development process for new commercial uses. Low impact design techniques could be considered for new sidewalks to encourage pervious pedestrian walkways and a more natural way for stormwater to be managed.

Many areas of the commercial center of Finksburg are not connected by sidewalks. Sidewalks connecting businesses will help to promote trip consolidation for customers and may also encourage increased pedestrian traffic. The construction of sidewalks can help to reduce traffic congestion and increase pedestrian safety.

Due to the speed and volume of traffic that is present along MD 140, the construction of pedestrian facilities is not recommended along the primary roadway. These facilities can be considered, however, for redevelopment that may be oriented toward Old Westminster Pike as well as any new access roadways.

5. Work with the SHA to lower the posted speed limit on MD 140 through the Finksburg community

Vehicle speeds on MD 140 in the Finksburg area can often become excessive and dangerous with the significant number of turning movements that occur on the roadway. One simple measure that could help to improve the situation is to reduce the posted speed limit and increase the monitoring and enforcement of drivers.

6. Provide commuter service to the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas

As traffic volumes continue to increase, congestion will become more problematic. The provision of commuter services to employment centers has the potential to reduce the overall number of vehicles competing for space on the roadways. Further consideration should be given to providing additional options for travel to and from this community.

7. Promote the use of the Maryland Midland Railway by local industry

The rail line crosses beneath MD 91 just east of Industrial Park Drive. Any opportunities to utilize the resource for additional freight transport should be considered. The transporting of goods by rail may help to ease heavy truck traffic and can also serve as an economic development tool.

Environmental Sensitivity

1. Explore the feasibility of and options for developing a community wastewater system to address existing problem areas, promote environmentally friendly redevelopment, and provide greater protection for water quality in the Finksburg area

Because wastewater management is such an important issue for environmental protection and redevelopment potential in the Finksburg corridor, a comprehensive approach to wastewater management along the entire length of the corridor needs to be developed. The first step should be to develop a comprehensive study of the entire corridor to assess the feasibility of implementing a community wastewater system(s) and determine the various options for the types of facilities to manage wastewater. The results of this study would yield recommendations for the best types and locations of facilities based on specific land uses and environmental features, including soils.

A community wastewater system that is designed to serve existing properties located closest to Liberty Reservoir would alleviate many of the concerns about potential groundwater contamination and failing systems. In keeping with the Action Strategies, the capacity, individual allocations, and design specifications of any community system should be strictly managed to prevent unintended growth and development. A community wastewater system that utilizes land treatment would not result in any new point source discharges. Connection to such a system should be made available to commercial and industrial properties as an incentive for redevelopment, and also should be made available to residential properties that are in an area identified as having septic problems, small lots, and limited soil capabilities. The intent would be to only hook up those residences with identified problems. Homes currently with no identified problems should not be required to hook up, but could if they were identified as having the potential for problems. In this way, a community system would not support new residential development, but would encourage redevelopment that is more environmentally friendly. Any private septic systems that would serve new homes not connected to the community system should use enhanced denitrification systems.

Any community system, regardless of its proposed service area, should have its treatment area located as far away from the reservoir as is feasible. Large land areas to the northwest of the corridor should be considered as potential locations for treatment options. Because the development of such a system realistically would not occur through the piecemeal redevelopment of properties, the County likely will need to forward-fund such a project and recoup the investment over time.

Within the identified service area of any community system, an emphasis should be placed on attracting low water users to reduce the amount of wastewater discharge. Additionally, within the identified community system service area (as well as the entire corridor), green building technologies should be required that promote energy efficiency, low water use and water recycling, state-of-the-art stormwater management, the use of sustainable building materials, and planting of native plant species that are easy to maintain and thrive under regional water norms.

2. Encourage the use of technologies, in new construction and retrofit projects, that employ water conservation measures that strive for zero stormwater and wastewater discharge

Due to the sensitive location of the Finksburg Corridor, extraordinary measures must be investigated to protect the integrity of the Liberty Reservoir. Considering the current zoning and existing uses within the corridor, many opportunities exist to significantly improve environmental impact through the use of advanced stormwater and wastewater technologies.

Opportunities for implementing stormwater management retrofits also should be explored to address existing sources of pollution. Most of the existing development that is located along MD 140 was built prior to the more restrictive environmental regulations that are currently in place. Additionally, nearly all of the development in this area occurred before further strengthening of local environmental regulations that took place in 2004. Designating areas of priority to utilize programs and initiatives that provide the mitigation and retrofitting of the existing built environment will significantly improve potential negative impacts to the natural environment.

3. Utilize local tax credits, federal and state grants and programs to promote redevelopment and new development to follow LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) construction standards

The U.S. Green Building Council has developed the LEED® rating system that certifies buildings that are designed and constructed to be environmentally friendly, often referred to as green buildings. Due to the environmental sensitivity of the Finksburg corridor, LEED® certified development and redevelopment would support many of the initiatives that are strongly favored by the community. The 2009 Green Building Tax Credit enacted by the Board of County Commissioners is a significant step towards making green building practices more affordable and establishing local examples of the benefits that green building can provide.

Gateway and Design

1. Coordinate with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to construct a landscaped median on MD 140, from the county line to MD 91

The section of MD 140 from MD 91 to the county line is the only portion of the roadway within Carroll County that contains a continuous left turn lane. Not only is this an unattractive feature but it also presents a significant safety hazard for motorists. A landscaped median on this section of MD 140 would significantly improve the functionality and appearance of this roadway that is located in the center of the Finksburg community. This should be done in conjunction with access management controls and the intersection feasibility study noted in the transportation section.

Implement the Boulevard zoning district and design guidelines, as noted in the land use section of this plan.

2. Within the targeted character areas, the following design criteria should be considered during the review and approval of development proposals

Character Area #1 – Commercial Core Finksburg

- Measures shall be taken to protect and enhance environmental features, especially water quality, vegetation, and wildlife habitat
- On- and off-site mitigation measures shall include the most current technologies to reduce and treat stormwater runoff and protect natural features
- A mix of proposed commercial, office, and industrial uses could accommodate existing users
- Vertical and/or horizontal mixing is preferred
- Building access will be oriented to internal roads
- Direct parcel access onto MD 140 should not be permitted
- Enhanced landscaping will be required along MD 140
- An emphasis will be placed on providing pedestrian connections between developed areas both on- and off-site and to access community amenities

Character Area #2 – Retail Center Finksburg

- Measures shall be taken to protect and enhance environmental features, especially water quality, vegetation, and wildlife habitat
- On- and off-site mitigation measures shall include the most current technologies to reduce and treat stormwater runoff and protect natural features
- A mix of proposed commercial, office, and industrial uses could accommodate existing users
- Vertical and/or horizontal mixing is preferred
- Direct parcel access onto MD 140 should not be permitted. Parcel access will be provided by Old Westminster Pike and the Dede Road extension
- Enhanced landscaping will be required along MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike
- A “friendly face” will be required towards residential uses along Old Westminster Pike
- An emphasis will be placed on providing pedestrian connections between developed areas both on- and off-site and to access community amenities

Character Area #3 – Main Street Finksburg

- Measures shall be taken to protect and enhance environmental features, especially water quality, vegetation, and wildlife habitat
- On- and off-site mitigation measures shall include the most current technologies to reduce and treat stormwater runoff and protect natural features
- Mixed-uses shall be incorporated into the master plan for the area and shall include commercial and/or office uses and residential uses
- Residential uses will be encouraged at varying densities – the potential for creating mixed-density developments shall also be explored
- Direct parcel access onto MD 140 should not be permitted
- Enhanced landscaping will be required along MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike
- A “friendly face” will be required towards residential uses along Old Westminster Pike
- An emphasis will be placed on providing pedestrian connections between developed areas both on- and off-site and to access community amenities

Character Area #4 – Finksburg Shops

- Measures shall be taken to protect and enhance environmental features, especially water quality, vegetation, and wildlife habitat
- On- and off-site mitigation measures shall include the most current technologies to reduce and treat stormwater runoff and protect natural features
- A mix of proposed commercial and office uses could accommodate existing users
- Vertical and/or horizontal mixing is preferred
- Architectural cohesiveness will be an overriding theme of the master development plan for the area that will attract retail activity
- Residential uses will not be permitted
- Direct parcel access onto MD 140 should not be permitted. Access to individual parcels shall be provided through consolidated access points and collector roadways that are parallel to MD 140
- Enhanced landscaping will be required along MD 140
- An emphasis will be placed on providing pedestrian connections between developed areas both on- and off-site and to access community amenities

3. Utilize a combination of incentives and initiatives to guide the improvement of the Finksburg gateway

Gateways to the community provide people with a first impression of the area. Finksburg is the doorstep to Carroll County, and should provide an inviting and attractive impression that projects the image that the County would like to promote. The purpose of enhancing the Finksburg gateway then is two-fold. First, it is to improve the aesthetic appearance of the gateway for local and county-wide economic benefit and community pride. Second, it is to improve the functionality of the circulation system for safety and economic benefit. Achieving these purposes is meant to be a public/private effort. Public money and capital investment will be leveraged to generate private investment and redevelopment of one of the county's most prominent gateways.

In order to achieve this, a four-pronged approach is recommended. These four prongs are:

- land use and zoning changes;
- capital improvements;
- financial incentives; and
- aesthetic improvements.

Implementation of the following recommendations, some of which also are contained elsewhere in this plan, would produce a coordinated and comprehensive approach to redevelopment and reinvestment in the gateway area.

Land Use and Zoning Changes

A "Gateway" designation should be created to identify the area within which initiatives will apply. The following land use and zoning changes should be considered within this area:

- Apply a Boulevard or Office Park and Employment zoning district that addresses uses and standards
- Recognize the existing uses and their contribution to the community, but also promote additional development opportunities
- Allow for the construction of new residential and/or mixed-use development in the vicinity of Old Gamber Road and Old Westminster Pike

Capital Improvements

State and County agencies will need to become involved in initiating specific capital improvements that will spur private investment in the area. These might include:

- Improvements to MD 140, such as:
 - access control;
 - the creation of a grade-separated median; and
 - the creation of an interchange at the MD 91/MD 140 intersection.

Discussions with SHA need to take place to refine their vision for this corridor.

- Local transportation system improvements, such as:
 - the extension of Dede Road to connect MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike; and
 - the creation of an internal access road in the northeast quadrant of the MD 140 and Dede Road area that would run behind the post office and other businesses and provide access to this area from MD 140 westbound.
- Other capital improvements might include the creation of a community septic system (see Recommended Actions for Environmental Sensitivity)

- Given that this is a gateway to the county, a tourism presence should be created here. Opportunities for creating this might include:
 - The development of a visitor's information center, which would involve:
 - Capital funding appropriated to acquire land and construct the facility in fee, or
 - Financial assistance for redevelopment provided in exchange for a long-term lease of all or part of the property for use as a visitor's center.

Financial Incentives

Financial incentives would only be available within the designated Gateway area, and might include:

- Gateway Renovation Tax Credit
 - Passed by the General Assembly in 2007; ordinance approved by County in May 2008
 - Includes credits for landscaping, site features, and architectural/structural improvements
- Façade enhancement grants
 - Could be used to improve the appearance of existing structures
 - Could be supported by local banks
- Low-interest or revolving redevelopment loans
 - Also could be supported by local banks
- Property assessment freezes
- Stormwater management retrofit grants

Aesthetics

Construction of the capital improvements and utilization of the financial incentives listed above will help to enhance the appearance of the Gateway area. Additionally, the following features would improve upon the Gateway's aesthetics:

- Sign amortization (in the designated Gateway area only)
 - Enhanced landscaping requirements for both public and private projects
 - Application of design guidelines that specifically address low-impact design and compatibility with existing residential uses (such as those along Old Westminster Pike)
4. Periodically, review and update zoning regulations for off-premise signs to protect and improve the aesthetic character of the corridor

The prevalence of billboards near Finksburg and along the MD 140 corridor is a concern of residents. Many feel that the large signs diminish the scenic qualities of the community and leave a poor impression on those visiting the county. One critical step toward improving the appearance of the corridor and establishing Finksburg as one of the welcoming gateways into Carroll County is to periodically revisit the regulations that pertain to off-premise signage to ensure that they remain current in the ways that they address the concerns related to this use.

5. Enhance landscaping as part of any corridor improvement project

A crucial component of improving the aesthetic quality of the gateway will be the provision of ample landscaping. As improvements, including highway projects, occur within the gateway, there should be a strong emphasis on enhancing the visual impact of development through landscaping. The effect of enhanced landscaping along the corridor will be to soften the highway corridor and provide a more positive and welcoming image. The design guidelines referenced in this plan will help to achieve this as individual parcels redevelop, but additional attention should be paid to landscaping during public projects as well.

6. Establish guidelines for lighting within the gateway

The illumination of businesses and commercial areas can play a significant role in the nighttime appeal of a community. It also can have a significant impact on adjacent properties and the street. The lighting guidelines detailed in the accompanying Design Guidelines document set minimum expectations for new development at the gateway to Carroll County. Pole height, overall brightness, shielding, and accent lighting are just some of the elements these guidelines consider as an aspect of site development.

❖ Fiscal Implications

The recommendations contained in this plan may be policy-oriented or action-oriented, and their implementation may be the responsibility of the County, other public agencies, private landowners and developers, or a combination of these. This section is designed to identify the potential fiscal impacts to the County of each of the recommendations. Expense to the County may also be covered, in whole or part, by staff time of current employees. The notation of “No Fiscal Impact,” means that the County would not incur direct or predictable expenses as a result of implementing the recommendation. When an “Undetermined Impact,” is indicated, there likely would be a cost associated with implementing the recommendation but that cost can not be determined at this time for various reasons. A “Fiscal Impact” may also be noted, which includes an estimate of the likely cost that would be incurred by the County if the recommendation were implemented. For recommendations that have an identified fiscal impact, the cost of implementing that recommendation is estimated to the best degree possible.

Land Use

1. Remove the Community Planning Area (CPA) designation from the Carroll County comprehensive plan for the Finksburg area
No Fiscal Impact
2. Implement the 2005 Action Strategy for the Reservoir Watersheds through compatible land use designations
No Fiscal Impact
3. Provide for a distinct separation between activity centers through zoning designations
No Fiscal Impact
4. Support the Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area to preserve farmland through the continued solicitation of State funding as well as locally donated easements
Undetermined Impact: While there would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, more information about how many acres would need to be preserved in these areas is needed before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.
5. Revise the boundary of the Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area to include well-suited farmland that was previously within the Community Planning Area.
No Fiscal Impact
6. Adopt a Boulevard zoning district to be applied in the area designated for Boulevard on the Corridor Plan map
No Fiscal Impact
7. Implement design guidelines for the MD 140 Corridor
Undetermined Impact: While there may be a public cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, it is anticipated that much of the implementation of the Design Guidelines will occur through private investment and reinvestment. More specific project information is needed before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined for any public sector funding of projects related to the Design Guidelines.
8. Maintain viewsheds and the visual connection to forests and open space

Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.

Transportation

1. Coordinate with SHA to conduct an alternatives feasibility study of the MD 140/MD 91 intersection and to complete an access management study of the entire MD 140 corridor

Fiscal Note: It is estimated that a thorough alternatives feasibility study for the MD 140/MD 91 intersection would cost between \$250-300,000. The access management study already is underway and is being funded through SHA.

2. Implement the proposed roadway projects contained in this plan

Fiscal Note: The following cost estimates reflect an average roadway construction cost of \$1.25 million per mile, plus 15% for design and engineering. Land acquisition costs are not included. Curb and gutter costs assume an average of \$30 per linear foot. Sidewalk costs assume an average of \$5 per square foot, and assume the width to be 5 feet. Resurfacing was figured at an average of \$1.75 per square foot.

Project Name	Length of Project	General Description	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source(s)
Extension of Dede Road	264 feet (0.05 miles) 26 feet wide	New road; sidewalk, curb and gutter both sides of road	\$62,500 construction \$9,375 engineering \$15,840 curb and gutter \$13,200 sidewalk Total: \$100,915 plus land acquisition	Carroll County
Industrial Park Internal Circulation Road	2,640 feet (0.5 miles) 30 feet wide	New road; sidewalk, curb and gutter both sides of road	\$625,000 construction \$93,750 engineering \$158,400 curb and gutter \$132,000 sidewalk Total: \$1,009,150 plus land acquisition	Carroll County, developers
Improvements to Old Westminster Pike	5,544 feet (1.05 miles) 22 feet wide	Resurfacing; sidewalk, curb and gutter both sides of road	\$213,444 resurfacing \$32,016 engineering \$277,200 sidewalk \$332,640 curb and gutter Total: \$855,300 plus land acquisition	Carroll County
Extension of Old Westminster Pike to connect with Suffolk Road	1,530 feet (0.29 miles) 22 feet wide	New road, open section	\$362,500 construction \$54,375 engineering Total: \$416,875 plus land acquisition	Carroll County

3. Construct bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and between the commercial center, residential areas, and activity centers

Undetermined Impact: The cost to construct trails ranges from \$100,000 per mile for a 6' wide trail located on parkland to \$500,000 per mile (including

acquisition, construction and shoulder widening) for an 8-10' wide trail located alongside a road. The proposed Roaring Run trail is approximately 19,000 feet (3.6 miles) in length and could, therefore, cost about \$2,000,000 to construct, with additional money for land acquisition needed if land cannot be gained in full from developers.

4. Construct sidewalks to improve pedestrian access, circulation, and safety
Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.
5. Work with the SHA to lower the posted speed limit on MD 140 through the Finksburg community
No Fiscal Impact
6. Provide commuter service to the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas
Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.
7. Promote the use of the Maryland Midland Railway by local industry
No Fiscal Impact

Environmental Sensitivity

1. Explore the feasibility of and options for developing a community wastewater system to address existing problem areas, promote environmentally friendly redevelopment, and provide greater protection for water quality in the Finksburg area
Undetermined Impact: The cost associated with this recommendation could be two-fold. The first cost to be borne would be that of conducting the study to determine the appropriate users, size and location of a community sewerage system. Once that is determined, the second cost to be borne would be the actual construction of such a facility. Because so many variables that would be involved in this process are unknown at this time, it is impossible to determine the fiscal impact that implementation of this recommendation might have. However, the cost to conduct the initial study can reasonably be estimated at around \$100,000.
2. Encourage the use of technologies, in new construction and retrofit projects, that employ water conservation measures that strive for zero stormwater and wastewater discharge
No Fiscal Impact
3. Utilize federal and state grants and programs to promote redevelopment and new development to follow LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) construction standards
Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.

Gateway and Design

1. Coordinate with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to construct a landscaped median on MD 140, from the county line to MD 91
Undetermined Impact: While a preliminary cost estimate for design and construction of the landscaped median is \$15 million, the timing and funding coordination on this project will have significant implications on the County's fiscal impact.
2. Within the targeted character areas, the [recommended] design criteria should be considered during the review and approval of development proposals
No Fiscal Impact
3. Utilize a combination of incentives and initiatives to guide the improvement of the Finksburg gateway
Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined
4. Periodically, review and update zoning regulations for off-premise signs to protect and improve the aesthetic character of the corridor
No Fiscal Impact
5. Enhance landscaping as part of any corridor improvement project
Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.
6. Establish guidelines for lighting within the gateway
No Fiscal Impact

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Appendices

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Proposed Boulevard Zoning District

ARTICLE XXIIIA, Boulevard (BLVD) District

§ 223-164. Purpose.

The Boulevard District (BLVD) is established to permit a range of uses on properties with primary access to major state and local roadways. Development of properties within the BLVD will incorporate creative design elements, consistent architectural and signage themes, improved access to adjacent commercial properties, and residential development opportunities as accessory to the primary commercial users.

§ 223-165. Principal permitted uses.

Principal permitted uses shall be as follows:

A. Uses of a service or commercial nature:

- Antique shops, art galleries, craft shops
- Alcoholic beverage stores
- Bakeries
- Banks, saving and loan institutions
- Bicycle sale and repair shops
- Blueprinting, printing, duplicating or engraving services
- Catering hall
- Clothing and apparel stores with goods for sale or rent
- Coffee shops
- Commercial parking lot or garage.
- Conference centers
- Convenience stores
- Dance and music studios
- Day care and day treatment facilities
- Department stores
- Fuel station
- Funeral establishments without crematoria
- Furniture stores
- Grocery stores
- Hardware stores
- Health care facility, excluding hospital
- Health clubs
- Hotels and motels
- Laundry and dry cleaners
- Office supply stores
- Offices, professional and business
- Pet supply stores
- Radio and television studios and repair shops
- Restaurants
- Service agencies, such as real estate offices, insurance and financial services, security services, messenger services, computer services, travel agencies and mailing services
- Shoe stores and repair shops
- Specialty stores
- Sporting goods stores
- Taverns
- Theatres, excluding drive-in
- Veterinary clinic without outside runways

B. Planned business centers, subject to Article XI of Chapter 103

C. Schools, colleges and universities

D. Other uses determined by the Zoning Administrator to be of the same or similar character as those listed in subsection A.

§ 223-166. Conditional uses requiring Board authorization.

Conditional uses requiring Board authorization shall be as follows:

A. Automobile service center

§ 223-167. Accessory uses.

Accessory uses shall be as follows:

A. Residential units of no less than 600 square feet and no greater than 1,000 square feet of floor area per unit in the same structure as an approved business use, subject to Planning Commission approval.

B. Uses customarily accessory to and incidental to any principal permitted or conditional use.

C. Outside display.

§ 223-168. Prohibited uses.

The following uses shall be specifically prohibited within the BLVD district:

A. Adult entertainment businesses

B. Mini-storage facilities

C. Outside storage of any type

§ 223-169. Bulk requirements.

The following criteria shall apply to all new construction projects and all redevelopment projects that include improvements to over fifty (50) percent of the gross floor area of the existing buildings on site.

A. Site Layout.

(1) Buildings.

(a) Setbacks. The front yard shall be a minimum of 50 feet as measured from the edge of the road right-of-way. The side and rear yards shall be a minimum of 20 feet as measured from the applicable property line if adjacent to a different zoning district.

(b) Orientation. All buildings, except accessory buildings, shall face the roadway with the highest functional classification in accordance with the Carroll County Functional Classification document and as determined by the Carroll County Department of Public Works.

(c) Service Areas. No trash collection bins may be located in or face any portion of the front yard. No loading docks may be located in or face any portion of the front yard.

(d) Height. No building may exceed 60 feet in height, except as provided in § 223-180.

(2) Parking.

(a) Setbacks. All parking areas shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from the front property line.

(b) Spaces. Parking requirements shall be calculated in accordance with Article VI, Chapter 103, but may not exceed 5 parking spaces for every 1,000 feet of floor area.

(c) Distribution. A maximum of 20 percent of the total number of parking spaces required may be located in the front yard.

B. Architecture.

(1) Primary street facades. A minimum of 3 of the following materials shall be used on building facades: brick; split-faced block; natural or cut stone; pre-cast concrete; glass; stucco-type finish materials; fiberglass if used for architectural features like column covers, cornice details, and facias. All other types of materials are prohibited.

- (2) Walls. No walls over 100 feet in length may be blank. Walls over 100 feet in length shall utilize at least 2 of the following: change in plane by recess or projection; public area such as outdoor seating or planting area with vertical plantings of trees or arbors; windows, arcades or canopies.
- (3) Windows shall dominate the front façade of the first floor of each building.
- (4) 360 degree architecture. All sides of a building shall be complementary to the primary street façade in architectural design and materials.
- (5) Entrances. Each business shall have at least 2 of the following main entrance features: canopies, porticos, arcades, peaked roof forms, arches, display windows, architectural details such as tile work or moldings integrating building structure and design.
- (6) Roofs.
 - (a) Sloped. Acceptable materials for sloped roofs include standing seam metal, dimensional shingles, and concrete, metal or clay tile.
 - (b) Flat. Flat roofs shall have a pitch of less than 3:12 and shall include a parapet or supporting walls that screen roof top equipment. Green roof construction is allowed.

C. Traffic and accessibility.

- (1) Access to adjacent properties. All users fronting on arterial or collector roads shall provide at least one of the following to allow for access between existing and future uses on adjacent properties: interior drives; rear access drives; frontage roads; cross access drives to provide for traffic flow in both directions.
- (2) Driveways. New access points onto arterial or collector roads shall be at least 100 feet from other access points and wherever possible shall align with existing or proposed driveways or access points on the opposite side of the roadway.
- (3) Pedestrian access.
 - (a) Pedestrian sidewalks shall be required on adjacent public streets and between each business and parking lot.
 - (b) Building perimeter sidewalks shall be placed along the front, rear, and sides of each building and shall be a minimum of 5 feet in width. A building perimeter corridor shall be a minimum of 10 feet in width to include the sidewalk, landscaping and outdoor seating provided a clear path for pedestrians is maintained.
 - (c) Pedestrian walkways constructed of asphalt or pervious material paths or trails that serve the purpose of connecting adjacent uses, commercial businesses, or the community may be used as an alternative to pedestrian sidewalks.
 - (d) Pedestrian sidewalks and walkways shall be separated from adjacent parking lots and interior drive aisles by a landscaped median or planting area at least 5 feet wide and shall be distinguished by changes in pavement texture or color.

D. Landscaping. All development within the BLVD District shall be landscaped in accordance with Chapter 134 of the Code.

E. Lighting.

- (1) Building facades. Lighting shall be located, aimed, and shielded onto the building façade and shall be designed to wash the façade with light. Spot lighting and floodlights are prohibited.
- (2) Parking lots and outside display areas. Lighting shall be full cut-off fixtures directed downward to parking lot surface and may not exceed 20 feet in height.

§ 223-170. Signage requirements.

A. A signage plan shall be submitted with the site plan. The signage plan shall outline:

- (1) Size, type, and location of all signs at the entrance to the development.
- (2) Size and type of the stationary direction sign.
- (3) Size and type of all flat wall signs.
- (4) Size and type of service entrance signs.

B. Exterior signage shall be for identification only and may not be treated as an advertising device. Signage text is limited to company name and/or logo.

C. Sign locations shall be permitted as follows:

- (1) For each single tenant building, one free-standing sign at a point near the project entrance and one building mounted sign.

- (2) For each multi-tenant building, one free-standing sign with only the building name at a point near the project entrance and a building mounted tenant identification system for each tenant.

D. Sign types shall be permitted as follows:

- (1) Free standing signs.
 - (a) Maximum size shall not exceed 32 square feet on a 2-sided sign.
 - (b) Maximum height shall not exceed 6 feet above grade except for the sign identifying the development.
 - (c) The sign shall be constructed of durable materials, not including wood.
 - (d) The sign shall be mounted on a sturdy base.
 - (e) Illumination by non-obtrusive ground lighting is permissible.
- (2) Building mounted signs.
 - (a) Sign location on the building shall be compatible with the architectural design of the building.
 - (b) No signs may extend above the roof or parapet line of the building.
 - (c) Illumination may be internal through a translucent letter face or opaque letters projected slightly off the wall and back-lit from a source concealed within the letter.

E. In multi-tenant buildings, the developer or owner is responsible for submitting a tenant identification system for approval.

F. Each lot is limited to one temporary sign, which may be double-sided and shall be removed within one year.

- (1) Maximum sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet.
- (2) Signs shall be mounted on two 4-inch by 4-inch wood posts with top of sign a maximum of 8 feet above grade.
- (3) Actual mounting height permitted shall be determined by sign proportions and location.

G. The following are prohibited:

- (1) Flashing or moving signs.
- (2) Exposed neon or other exposed light source signs.
- (3) Applied wood letters.
- (4) Light Emitting Diode (LED) signs, except for fuel stations.

H. This section supersedes the signage requirements in § 103-52F for planned business centers within the Boulevard district.

Design Guidelines

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Shaping The Finksburg Gateway

to Carroll County, MD



MD 140 Corridor at Finksburg

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Carroll County Department of Planning

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Community Organizations

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FINKSBURG CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

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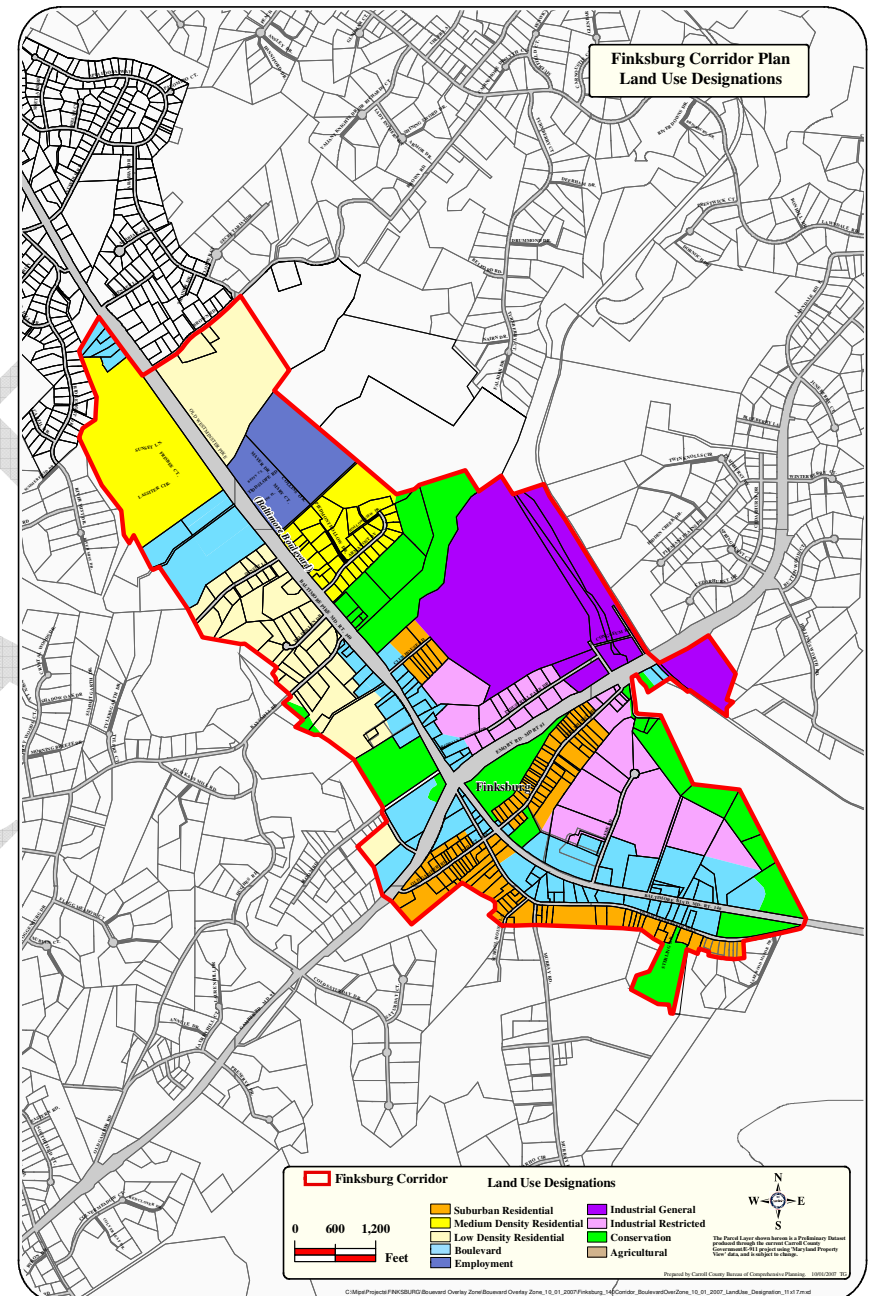
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PREFACE

MD 140, the most heavily traveled gateway to the County, enters the county just southeast of the Finksburg commercial and industrial core. What travelers see along this route in Finksburg provides their first impression of Carroll County. Just like the rest of Carroll County, Finksburg's rural setting and convenient location has made it a desirable place to live and do business. Despite the tremendous amount of growth and development that has occurred here over the years, much of the Finksburg area retains its natural beauty and rural charm. At the same time, portions of the MD 140 corridor immediately adjacent to the roadway have suffered from poor development patterns. The result is that the Finksburg area essentially has "two faces:" one that is immediately perceptible to drivers traveling MD 140, and one that waits to be discovered just outside the corridor. Unfortunately, the image that most people have of Finksburg is from MD 140, and it is not an especially positive one. These Design Guidelines seek to change that – to bring about positive improvements to the built environment that will generate greater investment in the corridor, create a more pleasant environment in which to live and do business, and ultimately shape an attractive and vibrant gateway for the county that will leave a lasting and favorable impression on all those who travel the corridor.

This set of design guidelines is written specifically for new development and redevelopment within the zoning districts of Boulevard, Business General, Neighborhood Retail Business, Manufacturing Processing General, and Manufacturing Processing Restricted that lie within the Finksburg Corridor as defined in the Finksburg Corridor Plan. This area generally encompasses land adjacent to MD 140 from the Baltimore/Carroll County line to Reese Road.

Using the design guidelines to guide private development and redevelopment will result in a much improved visual appearance along the MD 140 corridor in Finksburg. A safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment, coupled with improved design of the street frontage, buildings and signs of properties, will project a more positive and inviting image for both Finksburg and Carroll County. The net effect will be a perception of Finksburg, and Carroll County in general, as a prosperous place to do business, a comfortable and safe place to live, and an enticing place to visit.



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Design Guidelines

Although this set of guidelines provides specific guidance for site planning as well as site, building and signage design, it is not the intent of the Design Guidelines to dictate design. Instead, these guidelines are approaches to achieve basic design objectives that are identified in the Finksburg Corridor Plan and supported by the newly adopted Boulevard zone.

The Design Guidelines provide written guides, prototypical plans, illustrations, and photographs of good development that are envisioned in the zoning districts of Boulevard, Business General, Neighborhood Retail Business, Manufacturing Processing General, and Manufacturing Processing Restricted. The graphics and photographs are intended to help property owners, developers and residents better understand the design expectations of Carroll County. They suggest how development and redevelopment could occur differently from the existing development patterns, and provide guidance for improving properties and fulfilling the vision for the Corridor held by the citizens of Finksburg and Carroll County in general.

The main goal of the Design Guidelines is to enhance the image and function of the MD 140 Corridor through clearly articulated site planning/design and building design recommendations. The Design Guidelines also have guides for the treatment of the street frontage of properties adjacent to MD 140 and other intersecting streets, which significantly impacts the visual quality and function of these roads. The goals of the Design Guidelines are:

- a. Improve the overall visual appearance of the Corridor.
- b. Enhance the appearance and value of individual properties in the Corridor.
- c. Establish the desired design characters for the Corridor.
- d. Achieve better land use and function by using land more intensively and efficiently.
- e. Minimize the conflict of pedestrians and vehicular traffic to improve pedestrian and vehicular accessibility and mobility in the Corridor.
- f. Create opportunities for new economic development and for more concentrated multi-use development.

- g. Ensure improvements made for the redevelopment and expansion of existing businesses will result in high quality aesthetics for office, business, and industrial uses

Design Guidelines Components

The Design Guidelines were prepared based upon the evaluation of the existing characteristics of the MD 140 corridor in Finksburg, issues and concerns of the community, development goals as set forth jointly by the Department of Planning and FPACC, and goals and objectives contained in the 2007 Finksburg Corridor Plan.

The Design Guidelines document is divided into four (4) sections, including guidelines for site planning, site design, building design and sign design. The Guidelines are applicable to properties outside of the public right-of-way.

Section 1 Site Planning addresses important site plan issues that have significant impacts on goals as set forth by the Guidelines, including topography, building location in relation to MD 140, parking, access to the property, pedestrian circulation and safety, green spaces, and stormwater management facility location.

Section 2 Site Design provides detailed design guidance related to street frontage, entrances, buffers/screening, parking, car display, drive-thru aisles, storage and service areas, landforms, universal design, lighting, site furniture, stormwater management, and town centers/community centers/shopping centers. These are all important design elements that have significant impact on shaping the development quality along the MD 140 corridor.

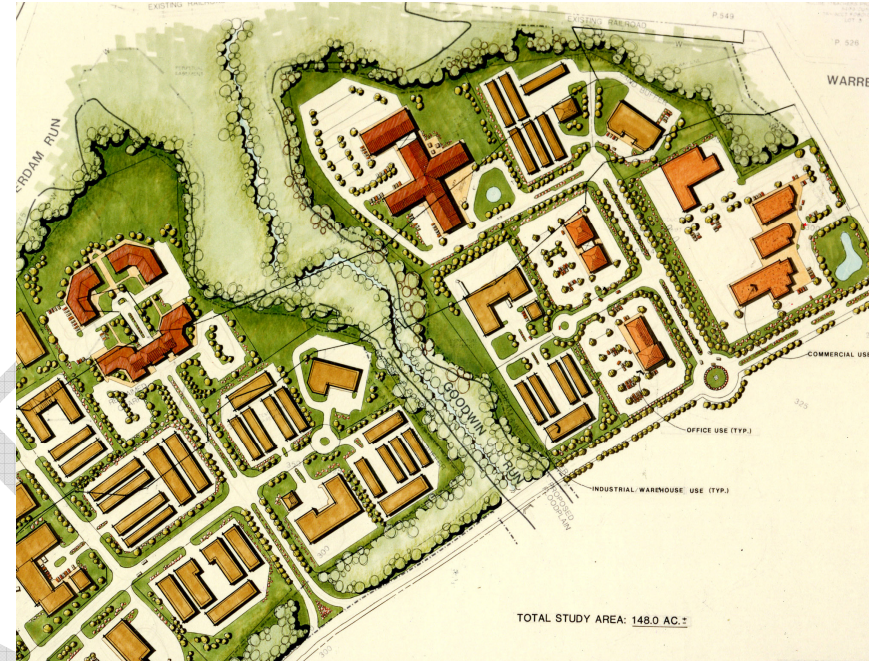
Section 3 Building Design includes design guidelines related to building mass, articulation, height, façade, walls/windows/doors, roofs, material and landscaping. The guidelines are for commercial, institutional, office, and industrial building. Residential uses are not included, except when they are part of a mixed-use development (as allowed by the Zoning Ordinance).

Section 4 Sign Design provides design guidance for signage related to color, letters and symbols, illumination, lighting, and placement. Issues related to billboards are not included in the Guidelines.

GUIDELINES

1 Site Planning

A site plan is the development framework of a property. It has significant impacts on the proper function, visual quality, physical environment, vehicular and pedestrian safety, universal accessibility, and social environment of a proposed development. The Design Guidelines developed in this document address only the issues/problems pertinent to and prevalent along the MD 140 corridor, based upon the evaluation of the existing conditions. Common problems observed include excessive cut and fill, inconsistent building setbacks and low building height that diminish the definition of the corridor space, numerous curb cuts within a very short distance, inadequate pedestrian amenities, confusing interior vehicular circulation, inappropriate locations of utility features, storage, and loading, and stormwater management facilities, to name just a few. The Guidelines were developed focusing on these issues.



(Above) A good site plan should be all encompassing, including natural features and creating open spaces. Circulation should be provided for vehicles and pedestrians. (P.E.L.A.)

1.1 Site Topography and Features

a. Objectives

- 1) Protect water resources within the Liberty Reservoir watershed.
- 2) Create a development pattern that is respectful of the existing land form/topography and environment.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas such as woods, wetlands, etc.
- 2) Make an effort to balance cut and fill within a property.
- 3) Use planted slopes in lieu of walls to accommodate grade change.
- 4) Preserve or restore any buildings of architectural significance on property.



(Above) Planted slopes accommodate grade changes and help to soften the site features. (P.E.L.A.)

1.2 Building Locations

a. Objectives

- 1) Locate buildings to preserve or enhance views.
- 2) Maintain the continuity of building-to-street and building-to-building setback relationships.
- 3) Use buildings to better define street edges.
- 4) Create physical or visual linkages among buildings in multi-building complexes.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Situate buildings on the property to take advantage of attractive views to and from the site
- 2) Orient building front entrance(s) toward public access streets.
- 3) As much as possible, maintain consistent building setbacks to frame the street and reinforce the spatial relationship between buildings.
- 4) Encourage buildings that are more than one story high to better define the street space and add affordable business and commercial space.
- 5) Use consistent architecture and landscaping, pedestrian walkways, interconnected parking areas, and building location to reinforce linkages when more than one building occupies a site.



(Above) A commercial use with its front façade and primary entrances oriented towards the major arterial road. (P.E.L.A)

1.3 Parking Lots

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize adverse visual impact of parking lots.
- 2) Respond to existing topography
- 3) Ensure pedestrian safety in the parking lot.
- 4) Provide continuous links between parking lots of contiguous premises.
- 5) Maintain cohesiveness among adjacent properties.
- 6) Provide a clear sense of direction.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Where parking must abut a street, provide buffering and screening. Also see Section 2 Site Design and Carroll County Landscape Design Manual.
- 3) Place the majority of parking to the rear of the building to minimize the public views of parking lot.
- 4) Locate handicapped parking spaces near the building front entrance.
- 5) Provide crosswalks at designated crossing locations to allow safe pedestrian access from the parking lot to shops and offices.
- 6) Provide sidewalks that lead from the parking lots to the main building entrances.
- 7) Create a coordinated landscape scheme with cohesiveness among adjacent properties.
- 8) Use planting medians or islands to separate the entranceway and interior roads from the parking bays and to indicate the changes in aisle and parking bay orientation.



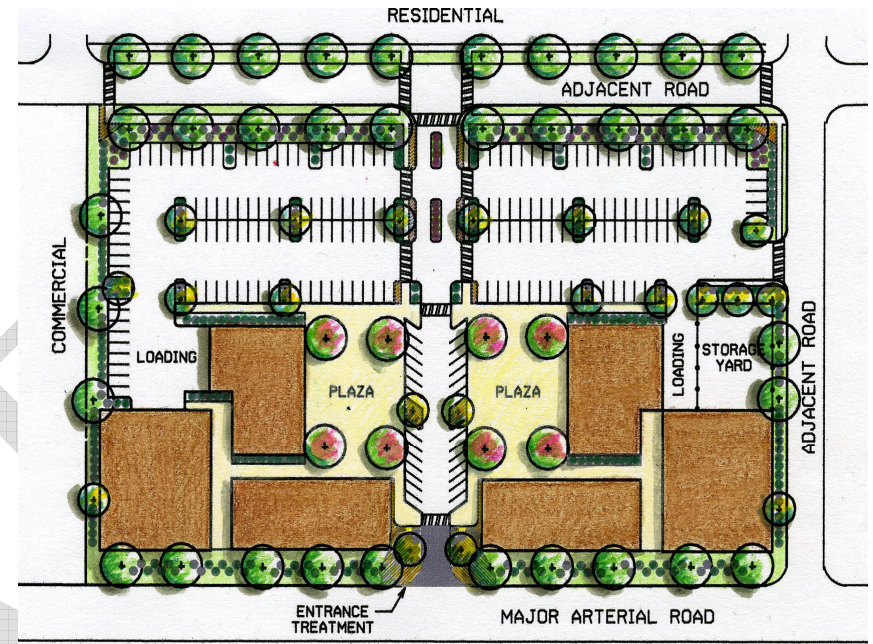
(Above) A landscaped buffer separates parking areas from the main road. (P.E.L.A.)

(Below) Pedestrian connections between parking areas and buildings allow for safe movement around the site. (P.E.L.A.)



1.4 Vehicular Access

- a. Objectives
 - 1) Minimize the number of vehicular accesses onto adjacent streets.
- b. Guidelines
 - 1) Combine accesses for multiple premises where feasible.
 - 2) Utilize the smallest number of access points possible, with no more than one driveway per street frontage



(Above) A single entrance can safely and attractively serve multiple buildings on a site. (P.E.L.A)

1.5 On-site Vehicular Circulation

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a safe, continuous and easy to follow vehicular circulation system.
- 2) Clearly delineate vehicular and pedestrian travel ways

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide a simple and direct circulation pattern, making use of signs, striping, paving, medians and other visual cues to indicate the intended direction of traffic flow.
- 2) Clearly delineate the entranceway using planting, medians, signs, lights, etc.
- 3) Where space permits, provide pedestrian walkways that are separated from vehicular travel lanes.



(Above) Paving materials of different types and colors help to distinguish pedestrian circulation from vehicular travel areas.

1.6 On-site Pedestrian Circulation and Amenities

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide outdoor spaces that create physical and visual connections between buildings and function as pedestrian amenities.
- 2) Maintain continuous connectivity and universal accessibility for all pedestrians.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Define a continuous accessible pedestrian route throughout the site: neighborhood to shops, parking lot to building, parking lot to parking lot, building to building, etc.
- 2) In multi-building complexes, design internal landscaped areas that connect the buildings. Accent the walks and open areas with landscaping that provides seasonal interest and color. Take maximum advantage of landscaping by providing outdoor eating areas and plazas between buildings for congregation or special events
- 3) Provide bicycle racks in all new retail and office developments to support multi-modal circulation.
- 4) Provide sidewalks in the right-of-way of secondary roads to link individual sites with a wider pedestrian network



(Above and below) Safe pedestrian circulation and attractive on-site amenities create a pleasing environment for patrons. (P.E.L.A)



1.7 Green Spaces

a. Objective

- 1) Minimize the impervious area of sites.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide pervious green space at a minimum of 20% of the property. Required buffers and unpaved stormwater management facilities (ponds, bio-retention areas, infiltration trenches, etc.) may be considered green space.
- 2) Enhance the attractiveness and ecological advantages of the green space through the use of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers.
- 3) Explore the use of pervious paving materials where appropriate, given anticipated use patterns
- 4) Native and/or drought-tolerant plant species (per the Carroll County Landscape Manual) should be used whenever possible.



(Above and below) Raingardens can be used to help absorb stormwater runoff. (P.E.L.A)



1.8 Utilities

a. Objective

- 1) Minimize visual intrusion of utilities

b. Guidelines

- 1) Place all electrical, telephone and cable television transmission lines underground or along the rear property line where feasible.



(Above) An abundance of signs and utility poles adds to visual chaos. (P.E.L.A)

2 Site Design

Site design is critical to the visual quality, ambience and function of each property, as well as that of the MD 140 corridor as a whole through Finksburg. As stated in the Preface, it is evident that the development quality of the Corridor has not lived up to the expectations of the citizens and the County. Significant improvements must take place to ensure better quality development and re-development in the future. As expressed by the citizens and the County, a number of site design issues must be addressed in order to achieve the goals of these Guidelines and create a positive image of the county at this significant gateway.

A windshield survey of properties along the corridor reveals an uncoordinated and generally unattractive approach to building treatments, parking, signage, and landscaping. The predominate features of the streetscape include utility poles, unscreened parking areas, multiple curb cuts and obscured entries, chaotic signage, and little to no site landscaping. Buildings themselves tend to show little attention to design detail, quality of materials, or neighborhood context. Little consideration is given to pedestrian safety or comfort.

In order to address these concerns, the following site design guidelines were developed. Included in this section are guidelines for street frontages, entrances and entranceways, buffers/screens, parking lots, automotive display areas, and drive-thru lanes. Issues related to storage areas, loading areas, dumpsters and ground-mounted electrical/mechanical equipment are also addressed, as are slopes and embankments. In addition, design guidelines were developed for universal accessibility, site lighting, site furniture, stormwater management facilities, as well as town centers/community centers/shopping centers. These guidelines support the Carroll County Landscape Manual.



(Above) Site design can be strengthened by deemphasizing parking areas and providing appropriate landscaping and buffering. (P.E.L.A)

2.1 Street Frontage

a. Objectives

- 1) Create a continuous landscaped edge with a cohesive image along the street to better define the street, improve the visual quality along the right-of-way line and enhance the streetscape.
- 2) Present an attractive façade to the public realm.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide a minimum of 6' wide planting buffer along the right-of-way containing trees and shrubs per the Carroll County Landscape Manual.
- 2) Provide shrubs, low fences or walls to screen unsightly site features along the street frontage that can not be relocated.
- 3) Use the existing topography/land form along the street frontage to effectively screen the parking lot.
- 4) Integrate sidewalks into the overall design of the street frontage along secondary streets. For safety reasons, sidewalks are discouraged along MD 140 frontage.
- 5) Provide a well- designed front yard with landscaping, decorative paving, lighting, and signage



(Above) Articulated facades, landscaping, lighting, and pavers make for a varied appearance. (P.E.L.A)

(Below) Plantings, low walls, and street trees provide good parking lot buffering when it is not otherwise available.



2.2 Entrances and Entranceways

a. Objectives

- 1) Ensure entrance design is compatible/respectful of the surrounding area and buildings to maintain cohesiveness.
- 2) Clearly delineate the entrance and entranceway.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide planting or planting island/median along the entranceway to enhance the sense of arrival.
- 2) At vehicular access points, provide a durable drive apron using concrete or decorative pavers to clearly delineate the access locations.
- 3) Use planting, lighting, bollards, signs and other features to enhance the sense of entrance.



(Above) An attractive and well-landscaped entryway helps guide visitors to their destination and creates a sense of arrival. (P.E.L.A.)

(Below) Lighting, landscaping, and distinctive paving help to emphasize entryways. (P.E.L.A.)



2.3 Buffering and Screening

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide effective and compatible buffers, particularly between residential uses and other more intensive uses such as commercial and industrial uses.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Comply with screen planting requirements in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.



A good parking lot buffer using a variety of plant material and a berm.

2.4 Parking Lots

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the adverse visual impact of parking lots on public right-of-ways and adjacent residential uses
- 2) Provide shade and visual relief for parking lots through landscaping.

b. Guidelines

- 1) See guidelines in 2.3 Buffering/Screening.
- 2) Provide interior planting as required by the Carroll County Landscape Manual.
- 3) Incorporate larger planting areas to allow planting in groves and into existing woods/planting areas, and preserve specimen trees.
- 4) Use planting slope in lieu of walls to accommodate grade changes.



(Above and below) Landscaped buffers act to screen parking lots from view and to soften the internal environment within the parking lot itself. (above, City of Lynnwood, WA: http://www.ci.lynnwood.wa.us/lmgs/parking%201_p3.jpg; below, http://www.smmgardens.com/transformations/posite/posite_after.jpg)



2.5 Automotive Dealer Display Areas

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide visual relief from the number of automobiles and the expansive paved area.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide planting buffer along street frontage, as specified in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.
- 2) Provide wheel stops along the edge of the planting area and buffer/screen.
- 3) Comply with interior planting requirements, as specified in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.



(Above) Car dealerships can add visual appeal to their sites through low landscaping that softens the “parking lot” effect while still allowing for display of the merchandise. (Toothman Ford: www.toothmanford.com)

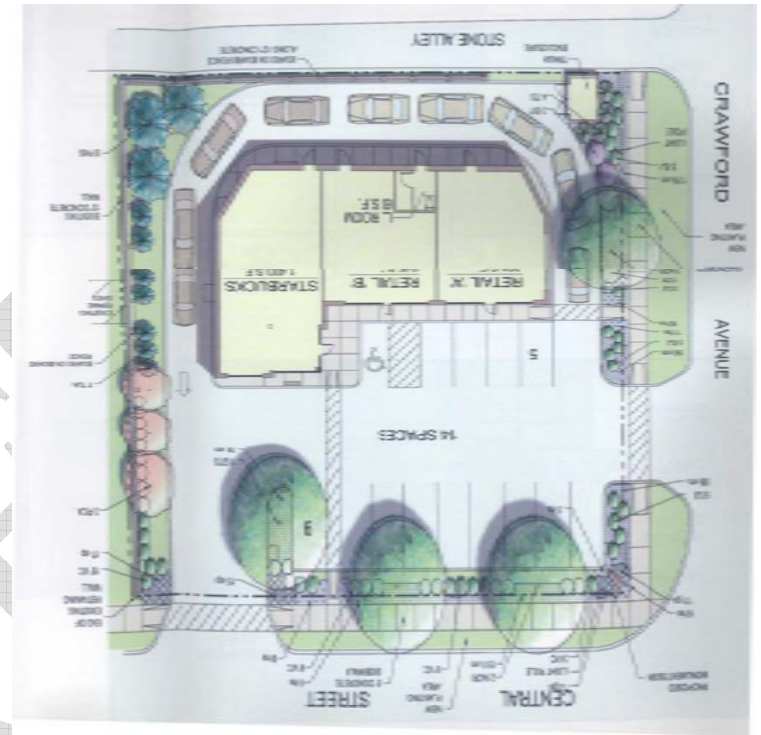
2.6 Drive-Thru Aisles

a. Objectives

- 1) Alleviate adverse visual impacts of service lanes on adjacent uses, especially residential uses.
- 2) Mitigate noise, fume, and light.

b. Guidelines

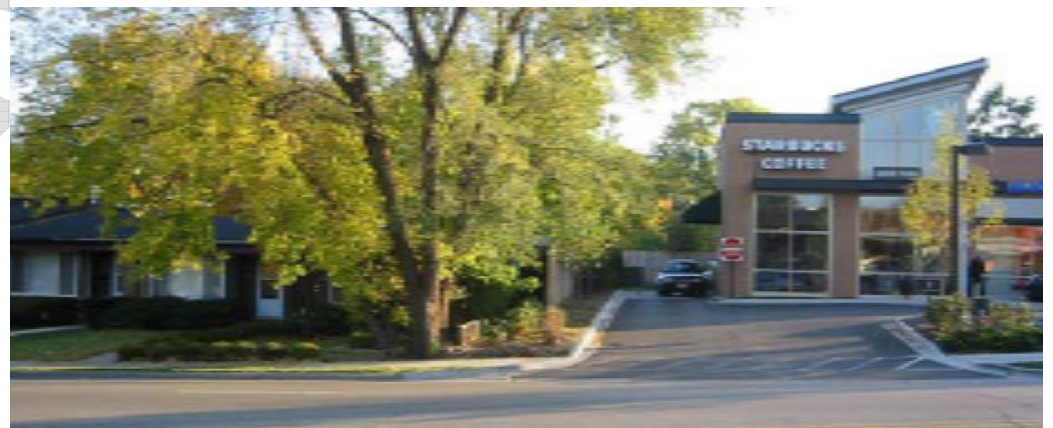
- 1) Provide effective buffering/screening between the drive-thru aisles and adjacent uses, without compromising safety and security.



(Above and below) The queuing lane for this coffee shop's drive-thru does not interfere with the interior parking and is screened from view by the neighboring residential use.

(City of Evanston, IL

www.cityofevanston.org/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/pdf/DGs_Final_000.pdf)



2.7 Storage and Loading Areas ,Dumpsters and Ground Mounted Electrical/Mechanical Equipment

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the adverse visual impact of service area site features.
- 2) Minimize the conflict between parking areas and service area site features.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Locate dumpsters, loading areas, storage areas, utility and mechanical features in the rear of the building away from the public street,
- 2) Avoid direct sight lines into these features from adjacent roads and entrance drives. Make best use of existing topography or create earth berms with landscaping for screening.
- 3) Conceal these site features from all adjacent properties and public and private roads. Enclosures should be consistent with the materials, color and design of the building.
- 4) Provide adequate screening of all service area site features, in accordance with the Design Guidelines.
- 5) Design site circulation to minimize conflict between loading areas, parking areas and pedestrian access.



(Above and below) Utility areas, loading areas, and dumpsters are easily screened with walls using building materials similar to those of the building and with landscaping that is similar to that used throughout the site. (P.E.L.A.)



2.8 Slopes, Embankments and Retaining Walls

a. Objectives

- 1) Avoid extreme grade modifications that are visible from the public right-of-way and may impact on adjacent properties.
- 2) Use topography to enhance visual quality.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Terrace slopes, building and parking lots to reduce the height of embankments, especially along property lines.
- 2) Incorporate distinctive site features into site design.
- 3) Coordinate site grading with landscaping.



(Above) Ground covers help to stabilize slopes while street trees in tree lawns provide shade and form.

2.9 Universal Design

Universal design, which is related to "inclusive design" and "design for all," is an approach to the design of products, services and environments to be usable by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or circumstance. Universal design is a relatively new term that emerged from "barrier free" or "accessible design". Barrier free design and accessible design provide a level of accessibility for people with disability

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a universally accessible environment for all new development.
- 2) All redevelopment/renovation should make every attempt to provide a universally accessible environment without extreme financial hardship with the approval of Department of Planning.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide stable, firm and slip resistant walkway surfaces.
- 2) Maintain a cross slope of 2% to 4% for any walkway surface.
- 3) Provide adequate clearance near the entrance door, planting beds and other site features.
- 4) Pavement edge heights should not exceed $\frac{1}{4}$ ". The height of a beveled edge should have a slope of 2:1 with an elevation difference of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ ".
- 5) Openings of drainage inlets or metal tree grates within any walking area should be less than $\frac{1}{2}$ ". The length of the opening should be perpendicular to the travel direction.
- 6) Space between 27" to 80" above ground should be clear of obstruction.
- 7) Where possible, eliminate the curb at building entrances, use fully accessible sidewalk along building and use bollards and/or planting to ensure pedestrian safety.



(Above) This shopping center demonstrates the application of universal design features, using a flush curb edge and bollards to create a safe and barrier-free pedestrian way.

2.10 Site lighting

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a safe pedestrian environment.
- 2) Avoid light pollution. Keep the glare of lighting off public roadways and on the site.
- 3) Use light fixtures to maintain cohesiveness of the site design.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide adequate illumination to ensure pedestrian safety.
- 2) Select light fixtures that are compatible in design with the building and other site features, and use the same style of light fixtures throughout the entire site when possible.
- 3) Use full cut-off lights with flat lenses to reduce light trespass.
- 4) The following lighting types should not be used: yard lighting, floodlights, gang floodlights, wall pack lights, non-cutoff shoebox lights, and cobra-head cluster lights.
- 5) Canopy lighting should be recessed within the structure. The edge of the canopy should protrude below the surface area of the light.
- 6) Refer to Carroll County's "Design Expectations" document for recommended lighting types.



(Above and below) The incorporation of recessed, cut-off lights in canopies can make a significant difference in the amount of light glare and trespass. (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute via www.skyandtelescope.com/resources/darksky/Bright_Lights_Big_nbsp_Problems.htm)



2.11 Site furniture

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a comfortable and convenient environment for pedestrians, patrons, and employees.
- 2) Use site furniture to enhance the image and identity of a property or a town center.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide site furniture at proper locations such as by the building entrance, along the sidewalk, in the plaza, park, or sitting areas.
- 2) Select site furniture that is related to the character of the buildings.
- 3) Choose the same, similar or complimentary style for benches, trash receptacles, bollards, planters, fencing, newspaper corrals, and light standards.
- 4) Use the same site furniture style within a development.
- 5) Avoid cluttering a site with too much site furniture.



(Above and below) Site furniture such as benches, trash cans, planters, and ornamental features help to create lively and comfortable pedestrian environments. (P.E.L.A.)



2.12 Stormwater Management

a. Objectives

- 1) For redevelopment, increase pervious area where possible.
- 2) Incorporate stormwater management facilities into the landscape setting and as amenities.

b. Guidelines

- 1) For redevelopment, provide planting areas where possible to increase pervious/landscape area and reduce the existing impervious area.
- 2) Consider conversion of planting islands into bio-retention areas/rain gardens.
- 3) Utilize stormwater management facilities as site amenities.
- 4) Utilize underground infiltration structures to reduce or eliminate surface stormwater management facilities.



(Above) Raingardens allow for the infiltration of stormwater runoff and can be attractive landscaping elements in and of themselves. (P.E.L.A.)

2.13 Community Centers

a. Objectives

- 1) Reinforce the development as a “community activity center” and gathering spot.
- 2) Provide a pedestrian-friendly environment within the center.
- 3) Minimize pedestrian and vehicle conflicts
- 4) Create a “main street” ambience and a unique sense of place

b. Guidelines

- 1) In addition to sidewalks, provide amenity spaces with seating and landscaping between buildings, in front of building entrances, or any other locations within the Center for congregation, relaxation, or programmed festive activities.
- 2) Incorporate comfortable gathering spots such as plazas, seating areas, and green spaces into the design of the Center.
- 3) Provide sidewalks, trees, ornamental lights, and site furniture along the frontage of buildings to enliven the pedestrian area and provide separation from the vehicular areas.
- 4) Provide parallel or angled parking in front of buildings and locate parking lots to the rear of buildings
- 5) Provide a system of continuous walkways with crosswalks and adequate lighting within the Center to minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts and to ensure pedestrian safety.
- 6) Use two story structures to frame the street, create a “Main Street”-type atmosphere, and reduce the footprint of large buildings.



(Above) Inviting and well-landscaped public spaces, with places of seating and other pedestrian amenities, help to create a sense of community and uniqueness.

3 Building Design

Building design has a profound impact on the functionality and appearance of a property, street corridors, and the surrounding neighborhood. Building facades that provide visual interest, especially on the first floor, are important in pedestrian-oriented areas. A distinctive identity for a corridor can also be created through a common palette of materials, forms, height and features forging a coordinated and inviting ambience.

The Design Guidelines formulated in this section are not intended to restrict imagination or innovation, but to emphasize design principles that will lead to a more attractive and welcoming built environment.

The Guidelines promote new development patterns that allow for more intensive and efficient use of prime sites. The Boulevard zone's emphasis on multi-story buildings and greater pedestrian orientation is a departure from the current pattern found in both business and industrial zoning districts. Ultimately, buildings within the Boulevard zone should have a character that is compatible with that of the Finksburg community.



3.1 Contextual Compatibility

a. *Objective*

- 1) *Ensure the character and design features of buildings in either infill or new developments are compatible with adjacent buildings, the neighborhood and the Finksburg Community as a whole. Refer to the “Design Expectations” handbook for examples of regional architecture.*
- 2) *Discourage the use of the standardized “franchise”-style building by using vernacular architecture as a base.*

b. *Guidelines*

- 1) Although a diversity of architectural materials, forms and styles are encouraged, building design should respect the characteristics of adjacent properties and avoid jarring contrast in building scale, forms, materials or styles when making transitions.
- 2) Should the building scale, forms, materials or styles of existing developments not be appropriate for the Corridor, the proposed building design should strive to achieve the goals of the Guidelines rather than repeat the inappropriate existing building features.
- 3) Franchise design or corporate signature buildings should follow the same guidelines applicable to other buildings while maintaining the corporate identity.
- 4) Integrate parking structures with their associated buildings. If the parking structure is freestanding, apply the same design concepts listed in the Design Guidelines.



(Above) National franchise restaurants can be contextual while still retaining their brand identity.

(Below) This veterinarian clinic in rural Maryland uses color, material, form and scale to fit in with the surrounding area.



3.2 Mass and Articulation

a. Objectives

- 1) Form a more town center/community center character at street intersections along the corridor.
- 2) Provide a well-coordinated architectural design.
- 3) Ensure a sense of harmony of building character along the Corridor.
- 4) Reduce the perceived volume or massing of the building and promote architectural interest.
- 5) Promote pedestrian friendliness.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Locate new, multistory buildings nearer to the streets of major intersections.
- 2) Pay special attention to the building's proportion, height and width, as well as the relationship of various design elements, such as windows and doors, to the entire building.
- 3) Achieve a balance of size and proportion between the proposed building and that of other surrounding buildings
- 4) Design new, multistory buildings with three distinct components: base, middle and top. Architectural details are important at the base. Define each component by horizontal and/or vertical articulation.
- 5) Articulate the corner on corner buildings. Treat corner entry architecture distinctively, to enliven intersections and facilitate pedestrian flow around the corner. Examples of treatments include angled or rounded corners, corner entries, towers, arches, and other architectural elements.
- 6) Articulate the building materials and openings. Carefully design the rhythm or repetition of

windows, columns, indentations or projections in the facade to create a cohesive pattern.

- 7) Avoid large expanses of highly reflective surface and mirror glass exterior walls, to prevent heat and glare impacts on the adjacent public streets and properties.
- 8) Avoid bright colors, particularly primary colors; limit them to trim and accents. Avoid bright white or off-white for buildings.
- 9) Commercial buildings with over 50 feet of building frontage should have the appearance of being broken into separate bays using structural elements.



(Above) The varied roofline, corner tower, and gabled roof with dormers on this bank help to reduce the bulk of the building and break up the mass of surfaces.

3.3 Height and Width

Multistory buildings help create and reinforce a street wall, thus better defining the street corridor space than lower buildings do. Multi-story buildings have traditionally been used to house many different uses in a compact area and therefore can make more efficient use of land.

a. Objectives

- 1) Encourage the construction of multi-story buildings.
- 2) The height and width of a building should be contextually compatible with its surrounding.

b. Guidelines

- (1) Within the Finksburg corridor, encourage buildings with at least 2 stories. Steep rooflines, false fronts, clerestory windows or other such architectural devices can also be used to give the appearance of two-story height.
- (2) Building frontage should occupy at least 50% of the primary street frontage of a property.
- (3) The height and massing of new buildings should reflect and respect the massing, height, and width of the existing neighborhood buildings.



(Above) Multi-story buildings help to establish a sense of enclosures along Main Streets, but they also provide for the vertical mixing of uses. (Jim Johnson)

(Below) Even the illusion of a second story helps to define space.



3.4 Façade

Building facades that have variety and visual interest, especially on the first floor, are crucial in creating pedestrian friendliness.

a. Objectives

- 1) Promote thoughtful building façade treatment at ground/street level that is pedestrian friendly and inviting.
- 2) Highlight the building's main entrance.
- 3) Use various architectural elements to create visual interest and avoid blank walls.
- 4) Articulate the building facades of warehouses or other similar buildings with architectural design details.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Allow views to the exterior by providing windows on ground floor façades, visible from abutting street or parking lot.
- 2) Use open arcades to provide a pleasant, inviting pedestrian experience.
- 3) Use lighting, landscaping, porches, awnings, signs, arcades, etc. to highlight the sense of building entrance.
- 4) Use window design in terms of size, shape, type, and pattern to break up the sense of massiveness on the façade.
- 5) Use corners, belt courses, bay divisions, and variations in wall plane to enhance the visual interest of the façade.
- 6) If the building's function requires a basic, box-like building form, introduce exterior articulation such as changes in color, material or plane for facades that are visible from public streets.
- 7) If the façade is more than 100 feet in length, use recesses and offsets, angular forms or other features to provide visual interest.



*(Above) The varied roofline and facade help to break up the building plane and create a pedestrian-friendly experience.
(Below) With adequate width and proper amenities, covered walkways can function as public space.*



3.5 Walls/Windows/Doors

a. Objectives

- 1) Use doors and windows to add to the attractiveness of a building, encourage pedestrian activity, enliven the streetscape, and make streets and buildings safer.
- 2) Make rear entrances as attractive and inviting as the front entrance

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide street-oriented primary entrances. Dual entry areas are also acceptable, with entries oriented to the street and to parking at the back or side of the building.
- 2) Maximize transparency and windows on the ground floor for pedestrian interest. At least 40% of the building façade should be window or window display area. Avoid windowless walls along the public street.
- 3) Establish recesses for entries and for outdoor eating or display areas. Besides providing gathering areas, these recesses can create visual interest along the street. Planters or landscaping may be incorporated into such recesses, but must not extend into the public sidewalk or right-of-way.
- 4) Use the same design guides above for the rear building entrance



*(Above) Rear entrances can be as welcoming as the primary ones.
(Below) The public realm is enlivened when windows allow for the visual connection between indoors and outdoors. (P.E.L.A.)*



3.6 Roof

a. Objective

- 1) Building roofs should be an integral part of the building design. They are an important element contributing to the visual interest of a building.
- 2) Roofs should also be designed to screen rooftop mechanical equipment.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Integrate parapets and roof screens into the roof design of new buildings and new additions. The material and color of roof screens shall appear identical to those in the roof or building
- 2) Break up long horizontal rooflines by providing articulations in roof design and the facades of new buildings. These articulations include change in the height or slopes of portions of roofs, or change in color, material, forms, etc.
- 3) Encourage the use of equipment wells for sloped or pitched roofs.
- 4) Consider the use of decorative roof elements, such as projecting cornices, to enhance roof edges, especially for mixed-use buildings and buildings that include retail uses.
- 5) Screen on-roof mechanical equipment by solid building elements. Wherever possible, cluster roof equipment and include in one screen.



(Above) This pitched roof provides visual interest and is compatible with the architecture of the surrounding area.

(Below) Parapet walls can be used to screen rooftop equipment.



3.7 Exterior Building Material

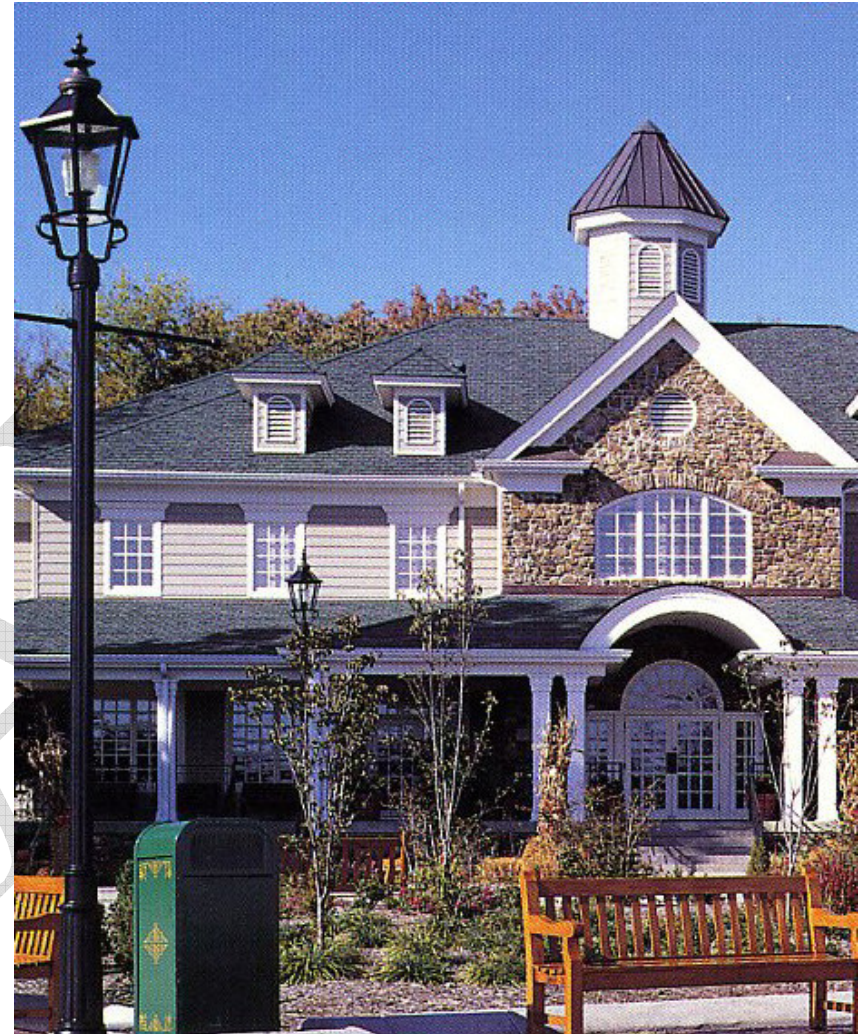
The finish of a building provides a statement for a particular business within and a visual interest for the Corridor as a whole. Quality building materials emphasizes a sense of pride for the corridor, the county, and its residents.

a. Objectives

- 1) Use quality building materials to create an identity for the Corridor and engender pride in its appearance.
- 2) Use building materials to enhance business image and identity and improve the visual quality of the site.

b. Guidelines

- 1) The following materials are highly recommended for use within the Corridor:
 - Finish face brick.
 - Ground face and split face concrete block.
 - Natural stone
 - Stucco and simulated stucco finishes such as 'Exterior Insulated Finish Systems' (EIFS).
 - Horizontal or vertical cement board siding (or similar material) and natural wood siding.
 - Cement board shake siding (or similar material) and natural cedar shake wood siding.
- 2) The following materials are not recommended for use within the Corridor:
 - Vinyl siding in any form.
 - Concrete block.
 - Painted concrete block or painted brick.



(Above) Using a variety of quality building materials enhances the image of the establishment as well as the community as a whole.

3.8 Awnings

a. Objectives

- 1) Encourage the use of awnings to create visual interest and provide shade.
- 2) Coordinate the design of the awning with the building in terms of placement, color, shape, and size.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Awnings should be mounted in locations that respect the design of the building.
- 2) Awnings should not obscure transom windows, grille work, piers, pilasters, and other ornamental features.
- 3) In openings with transoms, the awnings should be mounted below the transom on the horizontal framing element separating the storefront window from the transom.
- 4) Awnings should be designed to project over individual window and door openings (i.e., mounted in the reveals of openings).
- 5) Awnings that are a continuous feature, extending over several windows, doors, masonry piers, or arches, are strongly discouraged.
- 6) Awnings should be mounted on the wood or metal framing within a door or window opening (and not on the wall surrounding the opening).
- 7) Shed awnings, with no end panels, are the preferred awning style. Shed awnings are visually lighter and simpler, and they are more traditional in appearance than convex (bull nose) or box awnings.
- 8) Awnings with no end panels are more transparent and allow better views into storefronts. Convex-

shaped (domed) awnings may be appropriate for locations with round-arched window/door openings

- 9) Awnings should have simple horizontal valances. Scalloped or decorative valences are discouraged.
- 10) Awnings with a single, solid color are preferred. Awning colors should complement the colors of the building. Colors that call more attention to the awning than the building are inappropriate.
- 11) Awnings should be retractable (or appear to be retractable), so they may be used seasonally and will appear as temporary features on a building instead of fixed architectural elements.



(Above) These awnings reinforce the building design and product branding, but also contribute to a pleasant outdoor seating area. (P.E.L.A.)

3.9 Landscaping

a. Objective

- 1) Use landscaping and hardscape treatments to soften the surface of structures and to add year-round visual interest

b. Guidelines

- 1) Use plant material and landscaping features to accentuate the principal entrance of buildings.
- 2) Use a combination of annual and perennial plants to lend visual variety to the site.
- 3) Create amenity spaces with hardscaping, water features, and plant material.



(Above and below) Well-designed and maintained landscaping can transform the pedestrian realm.



4 Signage

The intent of signage design guidelines is to provide guidance for the ways signs are designed, constructed, and mounted. Signage plays a significant role in creating either a positive or negative visual image for the individual property as well as the corridor. A well-designed sign can be attention-getting and convey information about the business, while at the same time in keeping with the characteristics of Finksburg's rural and residential appeal.

The Route 140 corridor, being an older commercial and industrial corridor, has many freestanding, pole-mounted signs. Over time, the cumulative effect of these signs has created a chaotic appearance. The existing signage and billboards along the Route 140 corridor has a significant impact on the overall impression of the corridor as unattractive. Providing a more consistent placement and orientation of signage with better design quality would reduce the visual clutter as well as project a more positive image.

The following guidelines for signs are meant to provide additional guidance for the design and installation of signs within the Finksburg corridor that will be both functional and attractive. They are not meant to replace the sign regulations contained in the County Zoning Ordinance.



(Above) Classic signage that is eye-catching and straightforward.
(Neon Museum of Philadelphia via www.davidsonneon.com/museum.htm)

4.1 Design

a. Objectives

- 1) Achieve design consistency and harmony with the scale and architecture of the building to which the sign relates

b. Guidelines

- 1) The scale of signs should be appropriate for the building on which they are placed and the area in which they are located. The size and shape of a sign should be in proportion with the scale of the structure.
- 2) Signs should be designed so that they are integrated with the design of the building. A well-designed building facade or storefront is created by the careful coordination of sign and architectural design and a coordinated color scheme.
- 3) Signs in multiple tenant buildings should be designed to complement or enhance other signs on the building.
- 4) Sign panels should be limited in size to the width of the architectural support elements of the sign.



(Above and below) A uniform sign area can still allow for unique sign design and branding.



4.2 Color

a. Objective

- 1) Convey a positive and appropriate image of a business.
- 2) Attract viewer's attention without distraction or visual clutter.
- 3) Provide adequate and legible information to the viewer.

b. Guidelines:

- 1) Colors should be selected to contribute to legibility and design integrity. Color contrast has significant impact on the legibility of signs. A substantial contrast shall be provided between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols, to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible. Light letters on a dark background work best for both day and night time use.
- 2) Small accents of several colors may make a sign unique and attractive, but the competition of large areas of many different colors often decreases readability.
- 3) Sign colors shall complement the colors used on the building wall, adjacent buildings and the site as a whole.



(Above and below) Allowing for a variety of colors can lead to visually exciting and creative signs, as well as subdued and sophisticated signs.



4.3 Letters and words

a. Objective

- 1) Ensure legibility of the information on sign.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Letters and words should not be spaced too closely. Crowding of letters, words, or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, excessive spacing of these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually, again obscuring the message. As a general rule, letters should not occupy more than 75 percent of the sign panel area.
- 2) The number of lettering styles that are used on a sign should be limited in order to increase legibility. As a general rule, limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs.



(Above) Legibility and simplicity of lettering styles helps readers identify with a product or business easily. (P.E.L.A.)

4.4 Symbols and Logos

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a distinct identity for the business.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Use symbols and logos in place of words whenever appropriate.
- 2) Use pictographic images that convey the nature and character of the business.
- 3) Franchise businesses should capitalize on their regional or national recognition through the use of logos rather than extensive signage.



(Above and below) Logos establish a brand identity that allows businesses to be recognized instantly. (Below, Wash Depot, Clinton, S.C. www.waymaking.com)



4.5 Illumination

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide adequate illumination and minimize the adverse impact of excessive lighting.
- 2) Enhance the architectural features of the building.
- 3) Avoid light trespass onto adjacent properties
- 4) Provide nighttime legibility.

b. Guidelines:

- 1) Whenever possible, lighting should be focused down and inwards toward the sign to avoid light glare and trespass issues while providing maximum nighttime legibility.
- 2) Freestanding monument signs may be internally illuminated; however, the sign copy is the only portion that should be illuminated. The sign background or field shall be opaque.
- 3) Use of small, unobtrusive fixtures for external (projection) lighting is encouraged. Avoid the use of oversized fixtures that are out of scale with the sign and structure.



(Above) This monument sign makes good use of internal illumination for only the lettering portion of the sign.

(Below) Down lighting is simple, effective, and attractive.



4.6 Wall Signs

a. Objectives:

- 1) Use wall signs in a manner that reinforces facade rhythm, scale, and proportion and complements other building features.
- 2) Minimize the visual clutter of signs on walls.

b. Guidelines

- 1) On buildings that have a monolithic or plain facade, place signs so that they establish or continue appropriate design rhythm, scale, and proportion
- 2) Wall and projecting signs should be integrated into the building design to minimize visual clutter and help achieve a more consistent, attractive and pleasing view from public streets.
- 3) Signage should be mounted to fit within architectural elements and in no case should hide or obscure details or features.
- 4) Locate wall signs so that they emphasize elements of the façade itself.



(Above and below) Wall signs should be compatible with and reinforce building facades and architectural elements.



4.7 Window Signs

a. Objective:

- 1) Allow for the use of windows for business identification and limited advertisement without obscuring the function of the window for light and display.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Window signs should not be used as the primary signage for the business.
- 2) When window signs are used, they should be painted on the surface and of a permanent nature, and should generally follow the same design guidelines as apply to building mounted signs.
- 3) The use of temporary materials such as banners, cardboard or paper are discouraged, and advertisements for specific products or brands sold on the premises are discouraged.
- 4) If needed, window signs shall be limited to no more than 20% of the total window glass area of each business on the first floor facing the street.
- 5) Window signs are limited to retail uses only; they are not appropriate for office and industrial uses.



(Above) Window signs should be painted and allow for ample display of goods and visibility. (East End Salon, Philadelphia, PA – www.urbanblight.org)

4.8 Monument Signs

a. Objectives

- 1) Design monument signs to be compatible with the building design.
- 2) Provide adequate business information.
- 3) Enhance business identity.

b. Guidelines:

- 1) Monument signs are allowed up to a maximum height of six (6) feet above road grade.
- 2) Individual tenant sign panels shall be uniform in size, recognizing that the major tenant or the name of the center may have a slightly larger sign panel.
- 3) Signage shall be on the property of the business and shall be applicable to the associated businesses
- 4) Materials and colors for freestanding monument signs should be coordinated with the materials and design elements/character of the principal buildings on the site. This helps enhance the identity of the building at the street edge.



(Above) Monument sign materials can reflect regional character through the choice of materials. (P.E.L.A.)

(Below) Monument signs should be compatible with the buildings they are supporting. This sign also reinforces the local sense of place.



4.9 Discouraged Signs

LED signs.

Neon signs.

Revolving signs.

Sequential or continuous flashing light signs.

Pylon or pole-mounted signs.

Signs or lettering painted directly onto a building's façade.

Bulk pennants, banners, streamers, clusters of flags, propellers or strings of twirlers, or flares.

Tethered balloons or any inflatable signs.

Portable or "sandwich board" signs.

Roof signage.

Billboards / off-premise signs of any type or form.

Mobile or large movable signs.

DRAFT

APPLICATION OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

The majority of properties with business and industrial zoning in the Finksburg corridor have previously been developed. As a result, goals set forth by the Design Guidelines will be achieved over time by bringing existing sites into compliance with the Guidelines as uses are altered or expanded and properties are redeveloped.

These Guidelines augment the Finksburg Corridor Plan with respect to non-residential uses. Compliance with these Guidelines ideally will result in a more complete realization of the plan's vision for the Finksburg corridor. However, application of the Guidelines may be modified in cases of undue hardship or practical difficulties, or if the County determines that the purposes of these Guidelines may be better served by an alternate proposal.

5.1 Applicability

Any non-residential development activity requiring a site plan will be subject to review under the Design Guidelines.

5.2 Hardship

Applicants seeking a variance due hardship shall submit a written request to the Planning Commission specifying the section of this document they propose to fulfill through alternative compliance. The request must demonstrate that: strict compliance with the guidelines is not feasible or practical; or, would create an undue hardship.

5.3 Exemptions

Building repairs, repaving, resurfacing or restriping of parking areas, and other maintenance or repair that does not include the enlargement of a building/use.

APPLICABLE COUNTY REGULATIONS, CODES, MANUALS AND STANDARDS

Properties subject to the Design Guidelines may also be subject to other County regulations, codes, manuals and standards.

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